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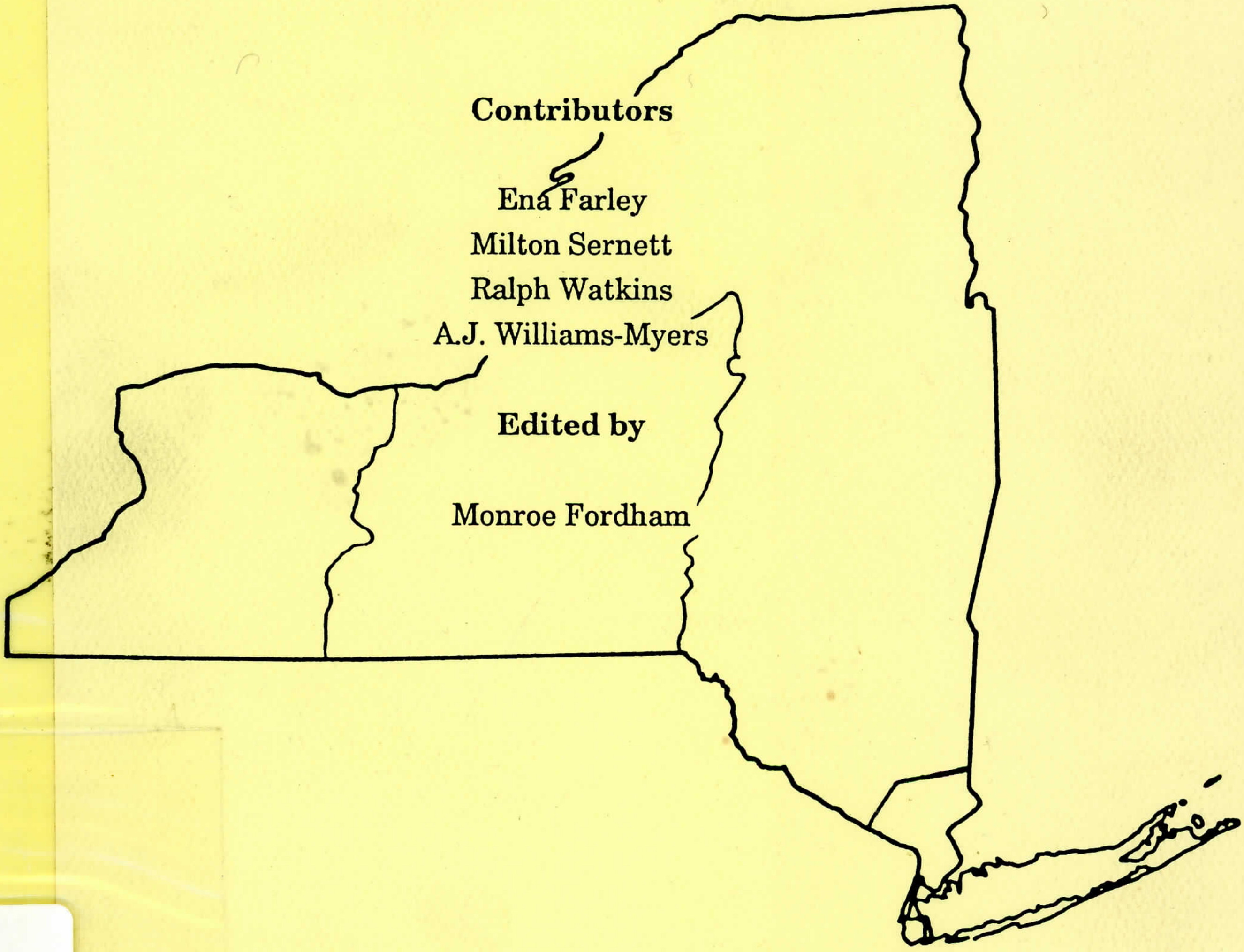
The African American Presence in New York State History:

Four Regional History Surveys

With a Selected List of African American Historic Sites for Each Region



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FOREWORD

As part of its mission, the New York African American Institute is committed to sponsoring research and other scholarly projects which document and disseminate the history of African Americans in New York State. One recent project that the Institute sponsored in that area was the "Regional Historical Surveys of the African American Presence in New York State." In that project, a group of historians were commissioned to produce surveys of the history of the African American presence in the various regions of New York State. The Institute's intent was to publish the fruits of the work of the regional historians and make the publication available to educators who are charged with teaching about the rich heritage of New York. The regional history surveys are published in this book. Ideally, the "surveys" should assist teachers in their efforts to integrate African American history into their lessons on state and community history. At the same time, this publication should prove to be a valuable resource for other persons with an interest in the life and history of African Americans in New York.

As a complement to the "Regional History Surveys," the Institute appointed a "Task Force on African American Historic Sites in New York State" to begin locating and providing documentation for sites that have significance in the history of African Americans in the state. To date, 43 such sites have been added to the New York African American Institute's data base of "Historic African American Sites in New York State." Those sites and the accompanying supportive information also are included as part of this booklet. As additional sites are identified and documented, they will be added to the sites' data base.

On behalf of the New York African American Institute, I extend and expression of appreciation to the regional historians: Ena L. Farley, Milton C. Sernett, Ralph Watkins, and A. J. Williams-Myers. I also wish to thank the members of the "Task Force on African American Historic Sites in New York State." The members of the task force were: Stefan Bielinski, Ena Farley, Larry Gobrecht, Ken Hall, Rudy Johnson, Joan Maynard, Ralph Watkins, and A. J. Williams-Myers. This project grew from a June 1986 memo submitted by Joan Maynard to the New York State Board for Historic Preservation under Orin Lehman, Commissioner, New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Finally. I wish to thank Monroe Fordham, who chaired both of the aforementioned groups and served as coordinator of both projects and as editor of this publication.

A. J. Williams-Myers, Ph.D.
Executive Director
The New York African American Institute
October, 1990

Introduction

In preparing to research and produce the four historical articles included in this volume, the state was divided into four regions (see map on next page). We then set out to identify an historian to research and write about the African American presence in the history of each region. At the outset, we were looking for historians with prior research involvement with topics pertaining to the history of African Americans in New York State. Fortunately, we were able to get commitments from four individuals who were ideal for this project. Drs. Ena L. Farley, Milton Sernett, Ralph Watkins, and A. J. Williams-Myers all agreed to work with the project.

Each historian was asked to produce a research essay which included at least the following: (a) information concerning the earliest known African American presence in the region in question; and (b) a discussion of the history of the African American presence in the region from the early period through the beginning of the 20th century. In doing the above, each researcher was asked to identify prominent and significant personalities, events, organizations, social movements, demographic patterns, and historic sites in the region for the various time periods. In addition, each historian was asked to provide a list of books, articles, and other materials which would aid future researchers.

REGION 1

We designated the counties in the New York City and downstate area as region # 1. We assigned historian Dr. Ralph Watkins to that region. Watkins is Chairman of the Black and Hispanic Studies Department at the State University College at Oneonta. For more than 20 years, Professor Watkins has been involved in projects aimed at researching and preserving the history of African Americans in the State of New York. His research has resulted in numerous scholarly articles on various facets of African American urban life and history in New York State. As an urban historian, Watkins was thoroughly familiar with the literature on African Americans in the New York City and downstate area.

REGION 2

Dr. A. J. Williams-Myers, chairman of the African American Studies Department at the State University College at New Paltz, is the most knowledgeable authority on the history of African Americans in the Hudson-Mohawk region. His research has uncovered many primary source materials that have not been used previously in research on this topic. Williams-Myers' research on slavery in the Hudson-Mohawk region has taken him all the way to Europe where he has worked in the papers of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. That group was heavily involved in providing schooling for slaves and free blacks in early New York. Williams-Myers has published numerous articles and presented scholarly papers on the African American presence in the Hudson-Mohawk region.

REGION 3

Region # 3, which includes Central New York and part of the Southern Tier of the State, was assigned to Dr. Milton Sernett. Professor Sernett is a member of the African American Studies Department at Syracuse University. His outstanding record as a scholar and specialist in the areas of African American religious history, and the 19th century abolitionist movement makes him the ideal person for region # 3. The region was widely known for its abolitionist activity. Many of the most prominent 19th century African American spokespersons were active in that region.

Dr. Sernett is the author of three books and many scholarly articles, essays, book chapters, and monographs. His most recent book is entitled, *Abolition's Axe: Beriah Green, Oneida Institute, and the Black Freedom Struggle*.

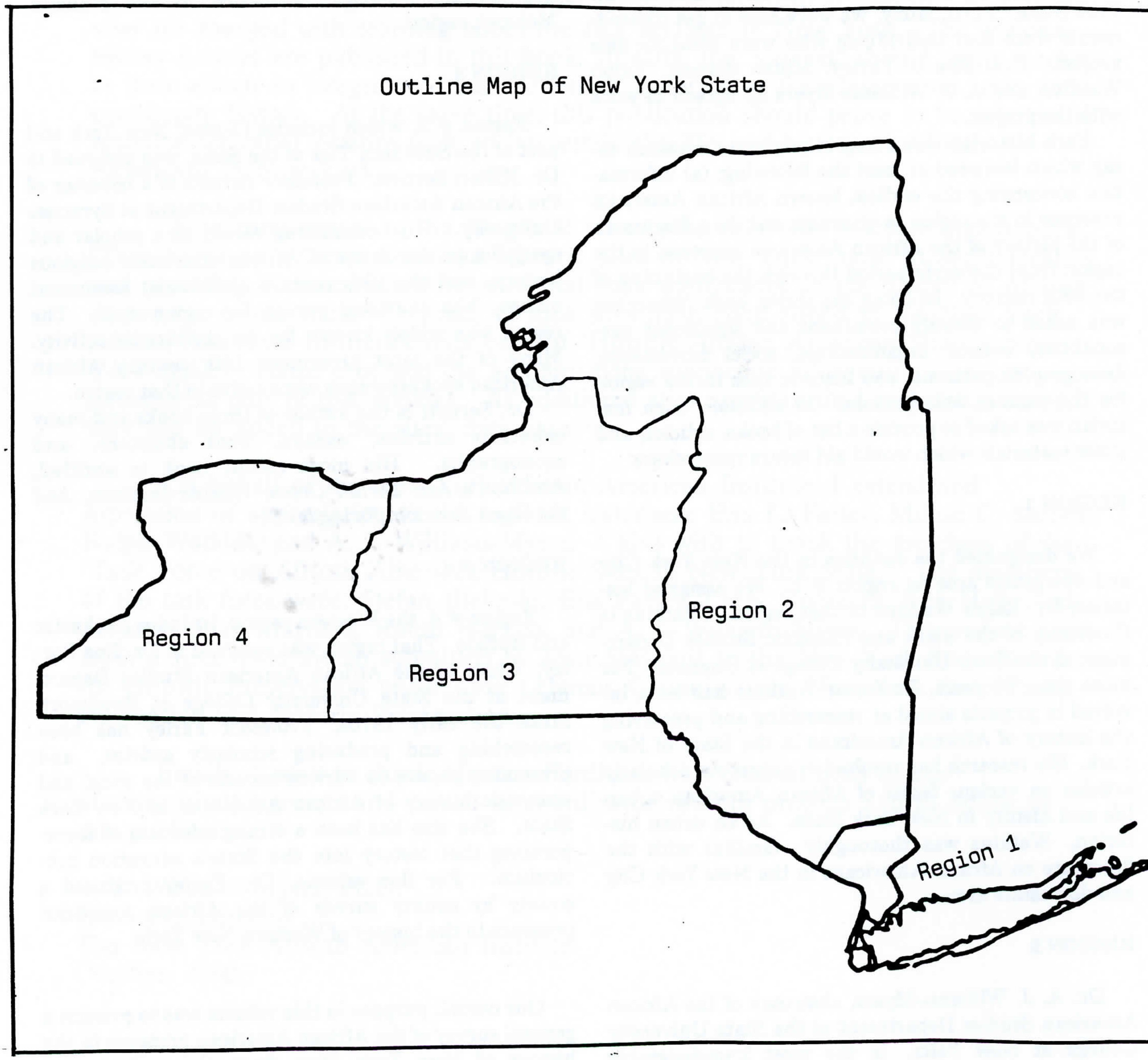
REGION # 4

Region # 4, the Western region, includes Rochester and Buffalo. That region was assigned to Dr. Ena Farley, Chair of the African American Studies Department at the State University College at Brockport. Since the early 1970s, Professor Farley has been researching and producing scholarly articles, and presenting papers on various aspects of the social and economic history of African Americans in New York State. She also has been a strong advocate of incorporating that history into the State's education curriculum. For this volume, Dr. Farley produced a county by county survey of the African American presence in the history of Western New York.

Our overall purpose in this volume was to present a general survey of the African American presence in the history of New York State from the early period through the beginning of the twentieth century. Hopefully this work will be useful to educators in their efforts to incorporate African American history into

their teaching of state and community history. It also should prove useful to the general reader. Our greatest hope is that this volume will stimulate a renewed interest in state and community history.
believe that the four articles that follow will contribut
toward all of those ends.

Monroe Fordham
Buffalo State College
February, 1989


Outline Map of New York State
Region 1
Region 2
Region 3
Region 4

A Survey of the African American Presence in the History of the Downstate New York Area

Ralph Watkins
Department of Black & Hispanic Studies
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NEW NETHERLAND

People of African descent were among the earliest inhabitants of the Dutch colony of New Netherland.[1] Initiated in 1624, the colony's population also included English, French, German, and Swedish settlers. It is estimated that at least eighteen languages were spoken there. The colony was under the control of the Dutch West Indian Company. In the early years of the colony, Angola and the Gold Coast were the primary sources of Africans for the Dutch slave trade. Beginning around 1598 the Dutch established economic links to Africa which eventually would result in their becoming the primary force in the Atlantic slave trade by the middle of the 17th century.

Although the actual year of the earliest presence of persons of African descent in New Netherland is subject to debate, the first record of African slaves being brought to the colony was in 1626, just two years after it was founded. These first arrivals were referred to as a "parcel" and consisted of 11 males. The reason for the controversy over the initial presence of blacks in New Netherland is that there is a record of a Jan Rodrigues, a mulatto from San Domingo (Haiti) who in 1613 remained behind in the colony to arrange trade agreements with the Indians that involved Dutch ships.[2]

At present there is no means of determining the exact number of African slaves brought to New Netherland prior to 1664. However, the ships that were said to have brought the first slaves directly from Africa to New Netherland were the *Tamandere* in 1646 and the *Whittepaert* in 1654.[3] Despite the controversies, the fact remains that at the time of the English conquest of the colony in 1664, people of African descent formed a significant element of the colony's population.

Little is known about the internal lives of the early African residents of New Amsterdam. However, it is known that African women were introduced into the colony soon after African men, and that some eventually married. Records show that African couples were married in the New Amsterdam Dutch Reform Church as early as 1641. Christinna Emanuels and Swan Van Loange were married in the Dutch Reform Church in 1664.[4]

Although slavery was the status of most of the Africans who arrived in the early stages of the colony's development, it was not long before a free black population began to emerge. As slaves, they could marry, bear primary responsibility for child rearing, and hire themselves out for wages. While they could not own real property, they were permitted to raise their own crops and animals, bring suit in court and their testimony could be used to convict whites. An example of their right to go to court involved the following incident: In 1638, Anthony the Portuguese, a black, sued a white merchant, Anthony Jansen, and was awarded reparations for damages caused to his hog by the defendant's dog.[5] Interestingly, most slaves were owned by the Company rather than by individuals. Instances such as these have resulted in the conclusion that slavery in New Amsterdam was "mild."

Freed slaves, or the half-free as they called themselves, were sometimes given land by the Dutch West Indian Company. The typical grant included a house and garden lot of 1,000 by 1,500 feet and a section of farmland of from five to ten acres. Sometimes the attainment of freedom and the acquisition of land led to marriage. Peter Christopher, in his study of the freedmen of New Netherland, has summarized that the emancipation of slaves during the Dutch period was a frequent occurrence, and that manumission took place at an age when the slave was still young enough to start a family.[6] In addition, the freedmen of New Netherland, in contrast to those freed by the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution, were provided a parcel of land upon which to support themselves and their families. Slavery under the Dutch appears to have been more like indentured bond service than the "peculiar institution" that emerged later in the southern part of the United States during the 19th century.[7]

The world of the freedmen incorporated marriage and family life, education, work and leisure, and the development of what can be called Afro-Dutch culture.

Evidence of Afro-Dutch culture can be seen in the naming practices of the freedmen. Paulo de Angola, Clara Crioole, Sean Van Loange, Anthony van Angola, Lucie D'Angola, Dorothy Angola, and Phizithiaen D'Angool were names that show that the processes of acculturation and accommodation were at work. In addition, children were named in such a way as to preserve an intergenerational sense of family. For example, Claes Emanuel was the son of Emanuel Van Angola and Phizithiaen D'Angool. At the age of thirty, Claes Emanuel married Lucretia Lovyse. They then named their eldest son Emanuel Van Angola, after his paternal grandfather, and their second son was named Lowys Angola after the grandfather on his mother's side.[8] The practice of naming children after relatives that are esteemed is widespread in the Afro-American community, and can be identified in areas throughout the United States both during slavery and after emancipation.

Other expressions of Afro-Dutch culture could be found in folk art such as woodcarvings, folk tales and public celebrations of certain events.[9] The best known public expression of Afro-Dutch culture was the Pinkster celebration. Pinkster was the Dutch name for Whitsunday or Pentecost, which is a church festival that takes place on the seventh Sunday after Easter in celebration of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples.[10] Anyone familiar with traditional West African religions would know that the idea of a deity descending upon or "mounting" mortals would find ready acceptance among people of African descent. Grafted upon the Dutch observance of this day were certain African cultural survivals such as the playing of banjos, drums, and fiddles, and the performance of "original Congo dances as danced in their native Africa." One observer noted that music was made by beating on skins drawn over the ends of hollow logs. The evolution of an Afro-Dutch culture continued for sometime. Naming practices, religious worship, marriage and family life, and public celebrations all reflected the blending of Dutch and African influences among the early black residents of New Netherland. However, in 1664 a new factor was introduced into the colony that forever changed the direction of its development.

ENGLISH RULE

The black population increased dramatically under English rule. So much in fact that between 1698 and 1790 the slave population increased from 2,170 to 21,329, a tenfold increase.[11] Starting in the latter half of the 16th century, when John Hawkins turned slave trader in 1562, the English had by 1664 incorporated their participation in the Atlantic slave trade into the overall expansion of their maritime interests.

The English supplanted the Dutch as colonial rulers in 1664. The Articles of Capitulation, the agreement that transferred the colony of New Netherland from Dutch to English control, provided Dutch residents with a number of guarantees. Included among the provisions were the acceptance of continued Dutch immigration into the colony, the rights of Dutch vessels to carry on trade with the colony, freedom of the Dutch to worship in their own way, and continued possession of their property. This last provision meant that the rights and privileges of slaveowners would be preserved.[12]

Although the English now controlled the colony, they did not make great changes in the laws governing slaves until the 1700s. The earliest set of laws imposed by the English were called the "Duke's Law" after the Duke of York, and were put into effect soon after they took control of the colony in 1664.[13] The part of the Duke's Law that pertained to bondsmen stated, "no Christian shall be kept in bond slavery, villeinage, or captivity, except such who shall be judged thereunto by authority, or such as willingly have sold or shall sell themselves."[14] The law required that indentures be recorded so that they formed part of the public record. Bond servants were expected to give a full day's work, and refrain from selling or trucking any commodity. In addition, he or she could not marry without the master's consent. The holders of indentures were allowed to administer corporal punishment to their bondsmen.[15]

The evolution of slavery as a distinct status can be traced to 1684 when the word "slave" was added to the list of those who were encumbered by an indenture.[16] Thus the actions of servants, slaves, laborers and apprentices were governed by the provisions of the Duke's Law. The emergence of a fully defined slave status was accompanied by a change for the worse in racial attitudes. Under the Dutch the social distance between black and white bondsmen was mitigated by practices that allowed blacks access to the legal system, an opportunity to develop family life and the chance to acquire property. Under the English, an opinion began to emerge that argued that black residents, whether slave or free were really not human, lacked souls, and were not worthy or capable of entering the kingdom of God.

A manifestation of worsening race relations in the New York colony was the passage of "An Act for the Regulating of Slaves" in 1702.[17] The provincial Assembly approved a series of laws which greatly circumscribed slave activities. For example, the congregation of "above [more than] three slaves" except when they were engaged in servile employment was prohibited. It was illegal for slaves to possess a gun, pistol, sword, club, or any other kind of weapon. Slaves could not participate in social activities without the master's permission, nor could they buy or sell anything. Assault by a slave on any Christian or Jew carried a prison sentence. Slaves could not serve as witnesses except against other slaves, and by introducing the terms Negro, Indian and mulatto as qualifiers for the word "slave," the institution of slavery in New York was given racial overtones.[18]

English rule also altered the black community internally.[19] Under the Dutch there were few impediments to marriage and family life among both bond and free blacks. The English on the other hand tended to separate slave couples usually by forcing them to live apart. In addition, child bearing among slave women was discouraged. Black men experienced increased difficulty getting work because of the attitude among white workers that slaves drove down wages and pushed up unemployment. The result of these practices was to put enormous strain on the Black family.

Blacks in colonial New York filled a number of occupations. Women tended to be concentrated in domestic service where they did cleaning, cooking, dishwashing, laundering, shopping, and general household chores. Men performed stable work, polished shoes, drove carriages and worked as porters. Black slave craftsmen included bakers, brewers, butchers, carpenters, coopers, goldsmiths, silversmiths and tanners.[20]

Race relations were dealt another blow in 1712. In April of that year, a conspiracy and uprising of a group of 23 slaves occurred. Armed with guns, knives, and swords, they set fires at about two o'clock in the morning of April 7 and ambushed whites as they hurried to extinguish the fires. Since several of the victims were slaveholders, many whites were convinced that slaves constituted "enemies of their own household," and therefore should be strictly regulated. Fear of slave insurrection was reinforced in 1741 when another, larger conspiracy among slaves was discovered.[21]

The so called "Great Negro Plot of 1741" began about noon following St. Patrick's Day.[22] A rash of ten fires (eight in six days), preceded and accompanied by robberies, erupted in the city of New York. Whipped by high winds that blew sparks onto nearby houses, the fires temporarily threatened the whole town. Fortunately, a rain shower helped reduce the danger of the fire spreading. Fires, however, continued to occur in the following weeks. Eventually many of the 9,000 whites on the tip of Manhattan began to suspect that the more than 2,000 blacks and the few Indians enslaved in the city were involved in some way with the fires.

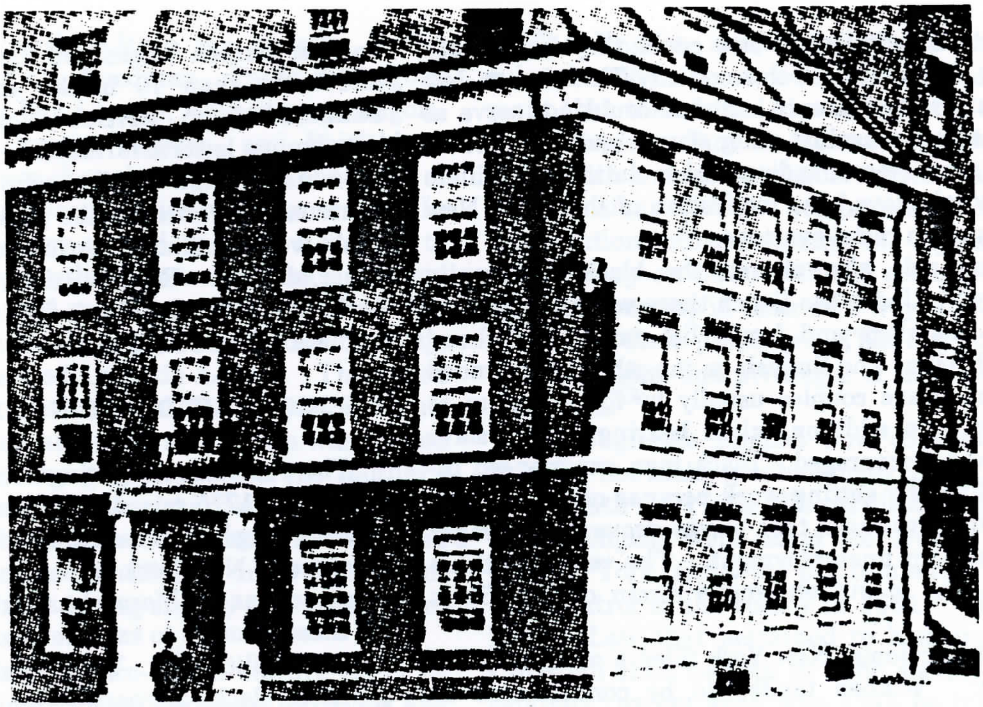
Once rumors began to spread it was not long before a shout went up "that the negroes were rising."[23] The following hysteria resulted in a series of charges that caused thirteen blacks to be burned at the stake, another sixteen blacks and four whites were hanged, and more than 70 blacks and seven whites were banished from British North America.[24] An anonymous letter addressed to Cadwallader Colden, a prominent New Yorker who would later serve as lieutenant governor of the province, charged that the trials were similar in nature to the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692. Race relations would continue to be problematic for New York City in the years leading up to the American Revolution.

AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND BEYOND

The outbreak of fighting between colonists and the British in 1775 raised new questions about the status of black people in American society in general and the province of New York in particular. The fear of slave insurrections in Massachusetts and Connecticut had led those colonies to exclude blacks from official service in their militias.[25] Yet, despite the lack of official sanction, blacks did participate when needed. In New York, the Militia Act of 1775 stipulated that "all bought servants during their servitude shall be free from being listed in any Troop or Company within this Colony."[26] This initial policy of exclusion was quickly modified to meet the British tactic of promising to extend freedom to slaves in exchange for military service. Another reason for the increased use of blacks was that Congress in 1777 began to fix troop quotas for the states. In order to meet its goals, New York eventually went so far as to provide in 1781 a land grant bounty that would be given to any person who delivered his able-bodied slave (or slaves) to a warrant officer.[27] The slave was to serve for three years, or until regularly discharged.

In addition to serving in battle, blacks were frequently ordered by civilian authorities to perform certain services. Early in the war, Gen. William Alexander, the commander of the American troops in New York, "summoned all male Negroes in his district, slaves included, to appear at the Common with all the shovels, spades, pick-axes and hoes they can provide themselves with."[28] The object of this action was to construct fortifications against the anticipated British move against New York City and Long Island following their evacuation from Boston. American defense of New York in 1776 was unsuccessful, and resulted in the British holding the city and areas of Long Island until 1783. Under British occupation, blacks worked most often as teamsters.[29]

The rhetoric of the American Revolution found ready listeners among New York's free and bond black population. The doctrines of liberty, equality and the rights of man, which were articulated in the Declaration of Independence, were hailed by blacks.[30] One person who was deeply moved by the language of the



Samuel Fraunces' Tavern

Declaration of Independence was a West Indian migrant to New York by the name of "Black Sam" Fraunces.[31] In 1762 Fraunces purchased the DeLancey mansion on the corner of Broad and Pearl Streets, where he opened a tavern that became well-known. Just prior to the Revolution his inn became an important social and cultural center for those who wanted to end British rule in the colonies. When the Revolution got underway, Samuel Fraunces left his wife in charge of the tavern while he enlisted as a private in the American army.

The American Revolution was formally ended by the Treaty of Paris 1783. The end of the war signaled the beginning of a new era in New York that would culminate in the passage of legislation that put New Yorkers irretrievably on the road toward ending slavery.

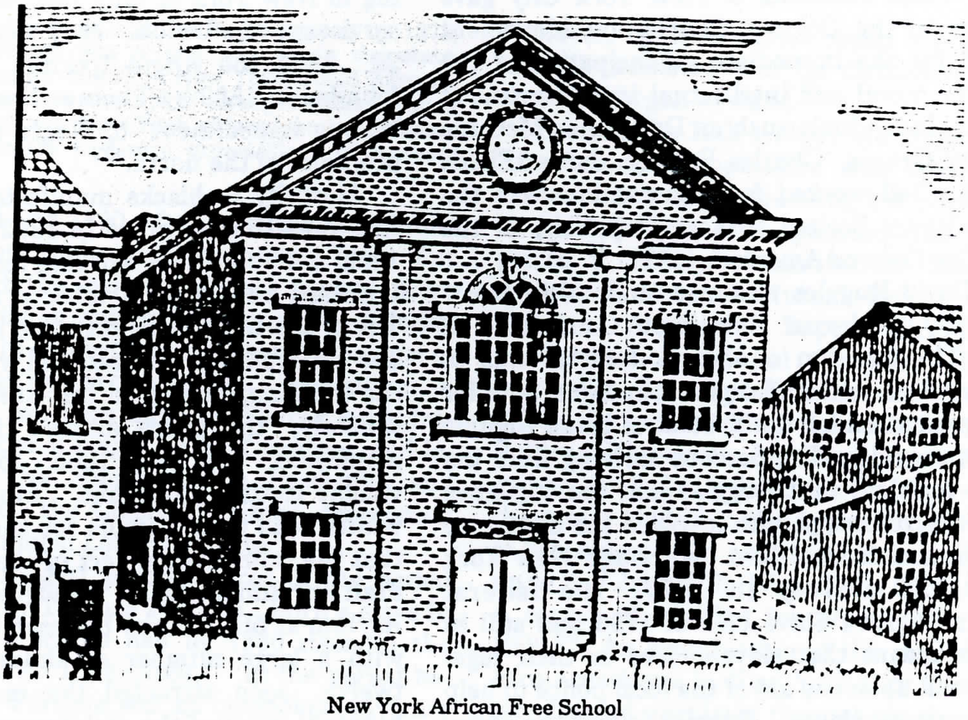
In New York the abolitionist cause predated the Revolutionary War. The first organized opposition to slavery in New York took place among the Society of Friends (Quakers) at a meeting in Purchase, New York in 1767.[32] A decision was reached to urge slaveholding members to free their slaves. By 1786 slavery had practically ceased to exist among them.

Other prominent New Yorkers who joined the antislavery crusade in the the early years included John Jay, who later became the first Chief Justice of the United States, and Gouverneur Morris, an active supporter of the American Revolution.[33] In 1785, two years after the close of the war, the "Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves and Such of Them as Have Been and May Be Liberated" was organized.[34] John Jay was elected president, and Alexander Hamilton, secretary. In time the organization came to be known simply as the Manumission Society.

Soon after its inception, the Manumission Societ sponsored the establishment of the New York Africa Free School. This act by the members of th Manumission Society demonstrated the close tie the saw between an effective emancipation and educatio Simply freeing people without providing them with th tools to function effectively was to put freedmen in precarious position. Additionally, the action of th Manumission Society in combining the efforts to educate black New Yorkers with the efforts to free them would become an important precedent in th abolitionist movement in New York State.

The entwining of education and emancipation ma have begun as early as 1704. In that year Elias Neau a French Huguenot, provided instruction to slaves i what may have been the first separate school for black in the New York colony.[35] Later the African Fre School No. 1, located at 245 William Street offered fre instruction in reading, writing, the domestic arts an navigation.[36] When the school building was destroye by fire in 1814, the City Corporation donated two lot on William Street for a new one. The first school wa so successful that another, the African Free School N 2 was opened on Mulberry Street in May 1820.[37]

The success of these early schools challenged th belief that blacks were incapable of being educated. I Brooklyn it appears that blacks exercised unusual control over their schools between 1815 and 1845.[38] Pete Croger, a free black and an early community an



New York African Free School

religious leader, initiated black education in Brooklyn. His goal was "to elevate the intellectual and moral condition of slaves and freedmen."[39] He and his brother, Benjamin, advertised in January 1815 that they were starting a day and evening school in Peter's home for any black who wished to attend. The school was not church related. Other schools that were established by blacks included one sponsored by the Brooklyn African Woolman Benevolent Society on Nassau near Jay Street in 1827, and the African Union Society's school in Carrville, a new black community in the rural 9th ward of Brooklyn around 1840. The Hodge brothers, Willis and William, organized a colored school in July 1841. In 1845, Brooklyn's school laws were amended to include Afro-American students. This action resulted in the loss of black control over their schools.[40]

Religion played an important part in New York's Afro-American community, too. In 1796, black New Yorkers started their own independent church movement. Peter Williams is given credit for founding the first Afro-American church in the city of New York by helping to establish the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1801, the year it procured its charter.[41] In 1809, the Abyssinian Baptist Church was started by eighteen members in a building on Anthony Street. St. Philips Protestant Episcopal Church came into being in 1818 and the Negro Presbyterian Church was started in 1821 on Rose Street with a young Rev. Samuel E. Cornish as pastor.[42] The number and role of Afro-american churches would increase over time. In fact, by the time of the Civil War the black church had evolved into an extremely complex social institution that not only provided places of worship, but also aid for the sick, shelter for runaway slaves, a training ground for leadership, and a meeting place and platform for the antislavery struggle.

The black residents of New York took an extremely active role in the abolitionist movement. The first black newspaper in the United States, *Freedom's Journal*, appeared in New York City in 1827. Its editors, Samuel Cornish and John Russwurm, a native of Jamaica and the first black graduate of Bowdoin College in Maine, wrote in the inaugural edition that, "We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the publick (sic) been deceived by misrepresentations, in things which concern us dearly, though in the estimation of some mere trifles;..."[43] As an abolitionist newspaper, *Freedom's Journal* predated William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator* by four years.

At the time of the publication of *Freedom's Journal*, the slave population in New York was in the process of falling from 10,088 in 1820 to just 75 by 1830.[44] The free black population in the state numbered 44,945 with 14,083 residing in New York City in 1830.[45] Although their status was that of free people their actual condition more closely resembled that of half-citizens. By 1830 male persons of color in New York State had to meet more stringent requirements for voting than did their white counterparts who enjoyed virtually universal suffrage. The Constitutional Convention of 1821 required that Negro voters meet a property qualification of $250.[46] The property qualification for white male voters was abolished.

In 1830, black residents of New York City gave their support to the Colored Convention Movement which called for the immediate emancipation of the slaves and the moral and intellectual improvement of free blacks.[47] Individuals such as Dr. James McCune Smith, Henry Graves, Charles B. Ray, James Fields and Philip A. Bell worked for organizations like the United Antislavery Society of New York City, or the newspaper *The Colored American* (1837).[48]

In 1835 David Ruggles was instrumental in creating the largely black-run New York Committee of Vigilance.[49] The function of the committee was to protect defenseless and endangered persons of color who were arrested under the pretext of being fugitive slaves and to provide aid to persons arriving from the South. The problem that Ruggles and the Vigilance Committee was concerned with involved the difference between state and federal law. Although New York State abolished slavery in 1827, the federal government's Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 was still in effect, which meant that slaveholders or their legal agents could call upon the aid of the local police to help apprehend runaway slaves. Ruggles joined the antislavery cause and the quest by free blacks for equality by arguing that, "the universal emancipation of our enslaved brethren from the iron bonds of physical servitude, and our own emancipation from the shackles of ignorance and the scorn of prejudice," were the goals he hoped to achieve.[50] Other activists included Charles L. Reason, secretary of the Political Improvement Association of New York City, Samuel Ringgold Ward and Theodore S. Wright who were active in the Liberty Party.[51]

Despite the obstacles, some blacks managed to achieve a measure of economic success. The historian Charles H. Wesley, pointed out that blacks were employed as blacksmiths, barbers, brickmakers, coopers, cabinet-makers, millers, plasterers, confectioners, bakers, cooks, fishermen, pilots, seamstresses, household servants, preachers, teachers and physicians. About one hundred families possessed capital worth at least $10,000 per family. Yet the burdens of southern slavery and the second class citizenship remained two great encumbrances upon the Afro-American community of New York City.

CIVIL WAR TO 1900

In 1860 Abraham Lincoln, candidate of the newly formed Republican Party, was elected President of the United States. That event precipitated the South's secession from the Union, their attack on Fort Sumter, and the beginning of the Civil War. When word of the attack on Fort Sumter reached New York, antislavery groups demonstrated their joy. Afro-Americans supported the cause of the North and showed it at a meeting in New York in May 1861 when they offered their services to the Union. They were rejected. On March 29, 1862 the *Anglo-African*, a weekly newspaper founded in 1859 by Thomas Hamilton, declared that a "strong impediment" to Negro advancement was "the prejudice of the north."[52]

Hostility to blacks manifested itself in a series of race riots that occurred in 1862 and 1863. In August 1862, a mob of Irish workers forced their way into the Lovillard and Watson tobacco factory in Brooklyn.[53] There the lives of twenty-five blacks, mostly women and children, were threatened when the mob set fire to the building, hoping to trap the workers inside. Fortunately, the police arrived in time to rescue the employees. In July 1863, four days of extremely violent rioting broke out. Most of the rioters were whites who were eligible for the draft.[54] It appeared that the immediate object of the mob's wrath was the draft enrollment office. However, the Colored Orphan Asylum at 5th Avenue between 43rd and 44th Streets, with a large number of children under the age of twelve, soon attracted the mob's attention. Fortunately, most of the children escaped out the back as the rioters broke in the front. The rioters destroyed the furniture with hatchets and axes, and killed a little girl who had sought refuge under a bed. In Weeksville and Flatbush, black men armed themselves and prepared to defend their families and homes. The riots that occurred in New York City were labeled draft riots and were said to have been caused by fears of job competition from black labor, as well as white resentment over having to serve in the Civil War.[55]

Despite the violence against them, and the opposition of New York Governor Horatio Seymour, black New Yorkers did join the Union Army. New York advocates of drafting blacks circumvented Seymour's opposition by getting permission from the War Department to recruit black regiments directly under national authority.[56] The Twentieth U.S. Colored Infantry departed for the front in March 1864.

The eventual Union Victory resulted in the end of slavery in the South. However, as the conclusion of the war drew near, the New York City and County Suffrage Committee of Colored Citizens pointed out that the "suffrage question" was the most important issue now before the Afro-American community in New York.[57]

Although Lincoln won a majority of the vote in 1860, the referendum in New York State calling for equal suffrage was defeated. In fact, equal suffrage for black voters in New York would not come until after passage of the 15th Amendment to the United States Constitution. In assessing the early post Civil War period in New York, one observer has written,

> No special powers were required to recognize, by 1873, that Negro freedom was a long way off in the state. Defacto freedom for blacks in New York would have involved a spontaneous upsurge of changed values among whites, and post war New York showed no such expansive accommodation to Negro expectations of a status revolution.[58]

Between 1870 and 1890 Afro-Americans continued working to improve their condition in New York. For example, although the majority of black workers were employed primarily as waiters, coachmen, bootblacks, hairdressers and in domestic service, some managed to acquire significant property holdings. In addition, a number of black workers supported labor organizations like the National Negro Labor Congress, and local groups like the Saloon Men's Protective and Benevolent Union, the Colored Waiters' Association and the First Combined Labor Institute.[59]

One of the strongest protest voices of the period was that of Timothy Thomas Fortune. Born a slave in Florida in 1856, Fortune had by 1880 risen to the editorship of the *New York Globe*.[60] In the period between 1881-1895, Fortune was an outspoken advocate for civil and political rights of the Afro-American. Critical of both the Republican and Democratic parties, Fortune advocated the creation of a new political party and threw his support behind the establishment of non-partisan political organizations that emphasized issues over party.[61] Although blacks would not begin leaving the Republican party in significant numbers until the 1920s and 1930s, the position taken by Fortune indicated that the debate over uncritical support of the Republican party was being carried on among black New Yorkers.

DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS

The end of the 19th century also marked the beginning of the transformation of the Afro-American community in New York City in terms of its composition and location. Although black residents lived throughout the New York, Kings (Brooklyn), Queens, Suffolk and Richmond (Staten Island) counties, the areas of greatest concentration were in Manhattan and Kings County. In the latter, the Long Island townships of Flatbush, Flatland, Gravesend, New Utrecht, Brooklyn and Bushwick taken together contained the largest black population in the New York area up to 1790.[62] During the years leading up to the Civil War, the most distinct Afro-American communities in Kings County developed in the semirural areas of the 9th Ward. Named for local blacks, Weeksville and Carrsville were situated in what is today part of the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn. The black population of these communities increased during the 1860s following the Civil War draft riots. However, by 1870 whites began moving into the area in such numbers that its distinctive Afro-American character began to wane.[63]

Early in the 19th century the center of Manhattan's Afro-American population was located in the Five Points, the area surrounding the present site of New York's City Hall. Although small, this community supported a variety of institutions that included the African Society of Mutual Relief, African Grove Theatre, Abyssinian Baptist Church, St. Philips Protestant Episcopal Church, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Free School.[64] In the 1880s, the center moved to Bleeker, Sullivan, Thompson, MacDougal and Carmine Streets, and was called "Little Africa."[65] Again, in the 1890s, the center shifted to the upper 20s and lower 30s west of 6th Avenue. In addition, the area along West 53rd up to San Juan Hill (West 61st - 63rd) also emerged as a center of activity for New York Blacks around 1900.[66] An examination of the settlement pattern of Afro-Americans in New York City shows that its center changed regularly throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. The settlement of Harlem represented a spectacular next step in the life of New York's black community.

Another important change in the city's black population around the turn of the century involved its composition. Largely native born for most of the 1880s, the influx of southern migrants during the 1890s began to alter the character of the black community. In addition, black immigration from the British West Indies, the Virgin Islands, and the Dutch West Indies and Cuba further loosened the control of the "Old Knickerbockers," the name some used to differentiate native born New Yorkers of Afro-American descent from those who came from the West Indies or the South.[67] Immigrants and migrants introduced new modes of living, dressing, and preparing and eating food. Although classified as "African" or "black," the people were in fact, quadroon, mulatto, and black with numerous caste and class differences. The black immigrants disapproved of segregation and were appalled by lynchings. Friction between them and native born black Americans was not uncommon either.

As these new population trends were occurring, New York experienced its worse race riot since the Civil War. It began on August 12, 1900, when a white policeman attempted to arrest a black woman on suspicion of "soliciting."[68] In the ensuing struggle, her companion came to her aid, and while defending himself against the off-duty policeman, drew a knife and fatally wounded his adversary. Three days later, angry policemen joined other whites in attacks on blacks up and down 8th Avenue between 27th and 42nd Streets. Black men and women were dragged from street-cars and assaulted. Blacks retaliated by throwing bricks, bottles and garbage cans down upon their tormentors from rooftops and tenement windows. These clashes went on in varying intensity well into the fall season. Harlem then, began emerging as the center of New York's black community as that community became more diversified and its members less tolerant of local race relations.[69]

Harlem began taking shape as a predominately black community about 1910. One of the people responsible for changing the racial composition of the area was Philip A. Payton, the Afro-American realtor.[70] Beginning in 1903, Payton persuaded white owners of a few houses in the Harlem area along West 134th Street east of Lenox Avenue to rent their long vacant apartments to blacks. The black community then expanded outward from this area. In 1904, Payton founded the Afro-American Realty Company. The company would have a short volatile existence, going out of business in 1908.[71] Its role would then be taken over in part by the Black Church.

Historically, the Black Church has played an extremely important role in the life of the Afro-American community. In New York City, especially in the 1890s and later during the period of the Great Migration, Black Churches increased the kinds of institutional work they performed. This was done in order to accommodate the changing needs of the New York black population as it expanded and diversified.

One major response of the Black Church to the burgeoning population it sought to serve was its decision to relocate in Harlem as that part of the city emerged as the new "Negro Mecca." Many churches were established long before the Great Migration of the World War I era, such as Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, St. Philips Protestant Episcopal Church, and the Abyssinian Baptist Church relocated in Harlem. In addition, newer churches such as Mercy Street Baptist Church, Salem Memorial Mission, Harlem AME Zion and the New Negro Morravian evolved out of the migrant and black immigrant community to provide religious and community services.[72]

A unique aspect of the relocation of Black Churches in New York was that some of them happened to be located on property in mid-town Manhattan that had become very desirable real estate. When they moved, as in the case of the Abyssinian Baptist Church which moved from West 40th Street, the present site of the New York Times Company, to 132 West 138th Street in 1916, the payment they received was great enough to allow them to put up a new building of worship, and invest in the local real estate market. In time the Black Church would emerge as the largest property owner in Harlem.[73]

In addition to meeting its religious and economic roles, the Black Church also provided needed social services. It functioned as an employment bureau, alerted members to the location of housing, was a center for men's clubs and women's societies, and provided forums where the important issues and controversies of the day were discussed. The presence of these kinds of activities helps to articulate the important place of the Black Church and why widespread participation in it by Afro-Americans, does not, as some social scientists would argue, represent an escape from the woes of this world.

America's involvement in World War I accelerated the pace of change within the black community. Black New Yorkers were ambivalent about U.S. support of England, France and Belgium in the war because of those countries control over and mistreatment of Africans.[74] Also, the black press constantly derided President Wilson's speeches on justice and freedom abroad while here at home blacks were being denied simple justice and made to labor in segregated work places in the federal government for the first time since the Civil War.[75] The residents of Harlem showed their disapproval of U.S. racial policies by holding a silent march down 5th Avenue to protest the 1917 race riot in East St. Louis, Illinois.[76] Scores of blacks were shot, burned and hanged in that riot. However, despite these misgivings, black New Yorkers from across the state did answer the call to fight in the Great War, producing the highly decorated 369th Infantry regiment, and the heroes Henry Johnson and Needham Roberts.[77]

It was not long after World War I that it became apparent that the racial policies of the U.S. should be changed. In fact, the summer of 1919, called the "Red Summer" by James Weldon Johnson, experienced 25 race riots in American cities and towns. Some of the worst violence occurred in Longview, Texas; Washington, D.C.; and Chicago, Illinois.[78] The Chicago riot, with injuries in the hundreds, was the worst in the nation's history.[79]

In New York, West Indian critics of U.S. race relations began to suggest some possible solutions. Hubert H. Harrison was born in St. Croix in 1883 and migrated to the U.S. in 1900. Called the "Father of Harlem Radicalism," Harrison argued as early as 1912 that black Americans had been reduced to the level of serfs.[80] Harrison charged that because of this kind of treatment and education, the black child was robbed of a chance for a life and assigned to a fixed status as a "hewer of wood and a drawer of water."[81] As a street corner orator, he protested against lynching, disfranchisement, and segregation. In 1917 he organized the Liberty League of Negro Americans, and in 1919

Marcus Garvey

he worked with Marcus Garvey in establishing the Harlem branch of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and African Communities League.[82]

By all accounts, Marcus Garvey may have been the greatest organizer of the black community in the United States. Only Booker T. Washington, the educator, and Martin Luther King, Jr., come close to comparison. Garvey was born in Jamaica, British West Indies in 1887. Following extensive travel to Europe, Central America, and the United States, Garvey settled in New York City sometime in 1916. He set-up an office at 56 West 135th Street, and from it began to organize the UNIA with the help of Hubert Harrison, William Ferris and W.A. Domingo.[83] Garvey's organization tried to provide an economic solution to the race problem by advocating black support for black businesses that operated within the assumptions of capitalism.

Garvey's greatest success came as an advocate of race pride. He captured the attention and support of large numbers of black Americans by asserting that black people had a noble past and had made significant contributions to the history of the world. He told blacks that they ought to be proud of their color and to support one another.

The widespread popularity of Marcus Garvey and the UNIA was an expression of the belief among Afro-Americans that the time had come for them to be more assertive in pursuit of their rights as citizens of the United States. The name given to this new attitude was "The New Negro Movement."[84] The "New Negro" would develop a self-confidence he had not previously known, push for full equality, and confront American racism head on. He would be defiant and impatient. The movement was broad and consisted of many parts.

Black New Yorkers supported the protest activity of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and its anti-lynching campaign. A. Philip Randolph's effort to organize the Brotherhood of sleeping Car Porters and Maids was viewed sympathetically by the largely working class Afro-American community. The black press in New York, the *Crusader*, *Emancipator*, *Voice*, and *Negro World* constantly reminded their public of the discrepancy between the promise of America and its reality.[85]

The most distinctive expression of the New Negro Movement among black New Yorkers took place in the arts. The theater produced *Shuffle Along* by Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle, *Blackbirds* featuring Florence Mills, and *Chocolate Dandies* by Eubie Blake. The white playwright, Eugene O'Neill, wrote *Emperor Jones*, which brought national attention to Charles Gilpin.[86] Afro-American music (Jazz) became very popular and could be heard at Ed Small's Sugar Cane Club, 135th and 5th Avenue, the segregated Cotton Club and numerous other locations.[87]

The most significant contribution of the age was in literature and came to be known as the "Harlem Renaissance. A review of the books, poems and essays produced by black writers during the 1920s reads like the canon of Afro-American letters. The New York Wits, as they were called, produced some of the most important literature ever written by blacks anywhere. Included among these works were: Langston Hughes, *Weary Blues*(1926), Countee Cullen, *Color*(1925), *The Ballad of the Brown Girl*(1927), *Copper Sun*(1927), Jean Toomer, *Cane*(1923), Claude McKay, *Harlem Shadows*(1922), and *Home To Harlem*(1928), James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Poetry*(1922), *God's Trombones*(1927), and *Black Manhattan*(1930). Other writers were: Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*(1928), and *Passing*(1929), Wallace Thurman, *the Blacker The Berry*(1929), Eric Walronds, *Tropic Death*(1926), Rudolph Fisher, *The Walls of Jerico*(1928), and Alain

Langston Hughes

Locke, *The New Negro*(1925). The magazines, *Opportunity* and *Crisis* played an important role in the Harlem Renaissance by offering prizes and forums for the creative writer.[88]

The study of Afro-American history and the collection of documents and other primary sources were aided greatly by the activities of Arthur Schomburg. Born in San Juan Puerto Rico in 1874, Schomburg arrived in New York City in 1901 where he expanded his interest in Black History.[89] In 1926 his efforts to preserve the historical past of Caribbean and American people of African descent were recognized by the Carnegie Corporation when it purchased his collection. During the 1920s, the "Schomburg Collection" was as George S. Schuyler remembered, "a great gathering place for all the people of the Renaissance."[90]

The ideology of the New Negro could also be seen in the aggressive way black New Yorkers began to demand that the local political establishment be more responsive to their community. During the 1920s, Tammany Hall, the Democratic party's political organization in New York, began an effort to wean the black vote from the Republicans.[91] The reason for Tammany's interest was the large increase in the number of blacks in Harlem and their potential for becoming an important voting block in New York City. Also, by 1928, an increasing number of black voters were becoming disillusioned with the New York Republican Party, which seemed unwilling to advance the candidacy of blacks for any of the many municipal jobs from elevator operator to Civil Service Commissioner.

Claude McKay

The breakthrough for the Democratic Party in its effort to secure a larger portion of New York's black vote came in 1930. During the 1920s blacks had unsuccessfully fought for a Harlem centered district court. Finally, early in 1930, Governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the bill establishing the court. In the November elections of that year, the black Tammany candidates, James S. Watson, and Charles E. Toney won by wide margins.[92] Thomas Henderson has written, "the judiciary election of 1930 was a convenient symbol of the changes occurring in Black politics in the city." The days had passed when speakers for the United Colored Democracy, Tammany's Black adjunct founded in 1898, were pelted and stoned from wagons.[93] In the coming decade ever increasing numbers of black voters would leave the "Party of Lincoln" for the real rewards of the Democrats.

The 1930s also were a time of severe economic hardship, protest activity, race conflict and growing political power for the residents of Harlem. The Great Depression caused a drastic reduction in the wages of black workers, both male and female. As a result, many were forced into overcrowded and substandard housing. The general health of the community also declined. There was an increase in pulmonary tuberculosis and a rising mortality rate. Incidents of criminal activity became more frequent as well. The accumulated effect of deteriorating economic conditions increased crime and poor public health care contributed greatly to the Harlem Riot of 1935.

Authorities estimated that about 10,000 blacks swept through Harlem destroying the property of white merchants.[94] Many of the merchants had refused to hire blacks to work in their stores despite being located in Harlem. Two years prior to the riot, some Harlemites tried to address the issue peacefully through the creation an organization called the Citizens League for Fair Play.[95] The Citizens League sought to pursuade white merchants in Harlem to hire blacks. The League urged blacks not to buy where they could not work. Other frustrations involved being excluded from employment by the Consolidated Edison Electric and Gas Company and city government, or being hired solely as janitors, maids, and common laborers.

In 1937, two years after the riot, black workers in New York City founded the Greater New York Coordinating Committee for the Employment of Negroes.[96] Included among its leadership were A. Philip Randolph and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. In 1938, the Coordinating Committee adopted the tactic of the blackout boycott. People were asked to use candles rather than electric lights once a week in order to force concessions from Consolidated Edison.

Although the material conditions for the majority of black New Yorkers remained poor, there were some indications of better times ahead. At the national level, President Roosevelt made a number of significant black appointments to various federal agencies, and in New York, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia did the same. As with most Americans, however, relief from the Great Depression did not arrive until 1941.

Approximately a half-million black Americans served overseas during World War II. Many viewed the war as merely part of a larger struggle that included fighting against many discriminatory rules, practices, policies and customs of America's white majority. Thus, black Americans had two goals: victory on the battlefield and victory at home over racism and discrimination. The symbol of the struggle was the "Double V" victory sign.

A. Philip Randolph

While the war raged overseas, blacks pushed for better treatment and employment in New York City. For example, in 1941, representatives of the Urban League, local YWs and YMCAs, National Negro Congress and other groups joined to form the Brooklyn Joint Committee on Employment for National Defense.[97] It had been shown that Brooklyn employers were slow to end discrimination against Afro-Americans, Jews and Italians, and to hire blacks almost exclusively for menial positions. One of the most flagrant practitioners of discrimination was the Brooklyn Navy Yard which systematically refused to upgrade blacks to supervisory positions. Companies were not the only culprits as several labor organizations also practiced discrimination.

Despite the opposition of some employers and organized labor, black workers did improve their condition during World War II. The most significant reason for this was the war which stimulated American industry and created new employment opportunities for both unemployed and underemployed. In addition, community organizations like the Negro Labor Victory Committee and the Urban League joined forces with the War Manpower Commission and the Fair Employment Practices Commission to put effective pressure on employers to alter their policies.[98] Interestingly, most black employment would come from the nondefense sector of the economy which was losing workers to the higher paying jobs of the defense industries. Companies such as American Telephone and Telegraph for the first time hired blacks as clerical workers while transportation companies took them on as subway and trolley motormen.[99] Black women also moved into sales and factory work as those jobs came open. In addition, many black and Puerto Rican women gained employment in the garment industry. Following the Second World War, the employment gains of New York City's blacks remained as the U.S. economy entered a period of unprecedented prosperity.

TRENDS SINCE WORLD WAR II

Perhaps the most significant development over the last thirty years has been the growing ethnic diversification of New York City's black population. Initially characterized as primarily native born, the black population today is at least 50% from Jamaica, Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Grenada, American Virgin Islands, Guyana, Haiti, Dutch West Indies, Panama, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. Most of the new arrivals have settled in the borough of Brooklyn, specifically its districts of East Flatbush, Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant. This has resulted in the Greater Bedford-Stuyvesant area becoming the largest black community in New York City. It was estimated, back in 1970, that nearly 40% of the city's blacks made their home in Brooklyn.

The settlement of large numbers of new immigrants has not been without discord and conflict. In fact, early in 1988, Brooklyn community leaders met to find ways to reduce ethnic and racial tensions. The conference concerned itself with five primary areas: (1) the lack of understanding of cultures and traditions of other racial and ethnic groups; (2) the failure of the educational system to provide equal opportunities to all groups; (3) the role of the news media and its portrayal of racial and ethnic issues; (4) the lack of job opportunities for youth of all groups; and (5) the role that housing policies and patterns play in segregating racial and ethnic groups.[100] The observation was made that the scarcity of affordable housing tended to exacerbate racial and ethnic discord.

Another manifestation of the ethnic diversity of the black community can be found in its institutions. Besides the churches and rotating credit clubs, there are a number of voluntary and common interest associations. Some of these are concerned with business ventures and economic development, and others with the issues of employment, youth, education, housing and politics.

The political development of the black community has been steady from the 1950s to the present. Although not yet able to elect a black mayor, the political power of the black community has increased greatly since the election of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., to the City Council in 1941. Since then blacks have been elected to City Council, the state legislature, and the U.S. House of Representatives. Symbolic of the growing power of local blacks was the election in 1968 of Shirley Chisholm as the first black woman to ever serve in the House of Representatives. Others elected to office since the war include Charles Rangle, Waldaba Stewart, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Hulan Jack, Samuel Wright, Basil Patterson, Carl McCall, Major Owens, Vander Beatty, Herman D. Farrell, Albert Vann, Roger Green and others.

The history of black people in New York City dates from the days of Dutch settlement. During the long history there have been changes in their treatment, status and the primary location of the center of their community. In the journey from slave to free person, and from merely free to citizen, black New Yorkers established and then reaffirmed their commitment to the formation of a community that was just and offered equal opportunity. Today, similar challenges offer opportunities for black New Yorkers to demonstrate their continued pursuit of these ideals.

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The Arduous Journey: The African American Presence in the Hudson-Mohawk Region

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SLAVE LABOR AND THE COLONIAL ECONOMY

The journey of the African American during the colonial period under first the Dutch and later the English has been appropriately described by A. Leon Higgenbotham, Jr., as "from half-freedom to slavery."[1] His intent was to indicate how the African, semi-independent under the Dutch because of a lack of a defined slave code, lost what little freedom that was enjoyed with the arrival of the British after 1664. This becomes especially noticeable at the beginning of the eighteenth century as the English both proscribed and prescribed the parameters within which the African could operate. Under the Dutch, Africans enjoyed "rights usually reserved for white indentured servants."[2] The owners' "casual attitude" toward their slaves meant that Africans, according to George W. Williams:

> went and came among their class without let or hindrance. They were married, and given in marriage; they sowed and, in many instances, gathered an equitable share of the fruits of their labors. If there were no schools for them, there were no laws against an honest attempt to acquire knowledge at seasonable times.[3]

But as Higgenbotham reminds his reader, although this so-called "casual attitude" of the master class moderated against a more severe race conscious society, slavery in New Netherland was only in its infancy when the British intruded. It is probable that the "colony might well have followed the harsher models of Massachusetts and Virginia."[4]

It was the British colonial experience in what was formerly a Dutch possession that made the colony reflect a system of slavery that was not that much different from the institution in the Chesapeake and lower South. The African American journey under the British was a well proscribed one, with a slave code defined in the "Duke's Law." A very detailed and sweeping piece of legislation (14 points in all), the Duke's Law, enacted on December 12, 1712, states in part:

> . . . (3) that because slave numbers increase daily and they federate for purpose of running away, or other ill-practices, no more than three to gather together other than in employ of masters on penalty of being whipped with forty lashes at the discretion of an Justice of the Peace. . . . (10) slaves shall be put to death for murder of whites, rape, or willfully burn any dwelling-house, barn . . .[5]

In the shadow of such a code, Africans under the British moved from half-freedom to no freedom. Enslaved and free Africans were at the whim and mercy of the master class. The slave codes, as embodied in the Duke's Laws was a mantel of darkness that shroud the true meaning of humanity in the Hudson-Mohawk region until a crack appeared in the nineteenth century with the demise of slavery in New York State. Until then, the journey of the African was defined by obedience and labor with accommodation in the exploitation of the natural resources of the valley. The African, however, was always alert to an opportune time to resist the system's inhumanity through flight and rebellion.

The arduous journey for the African under the British was orchestrated as a means of making an unprofitable venture (the exploitation of the region's natural resources) profitable. Plugging into a pre-existent labor source (the African slave trade), the English essentially acknowledged the need for an alternative source of laborers other than relying totally on white settlers and white indentured servants. Initially there was only a trickle of white immigrants into the Hudson-Mohawk region.[6] If Royal Governor Dogan's idea of a manorial system spanning the Hudson Valley populated by white farmers who exploited the land for the manorial lords in exchange for tenacy was to be a success, then the temporary import of African labor to offset the trickle was deemed imperative.

To insure themselves a guaranteed labor source, manorial lords, from Philip Skene at the upper reaches of Lake Champlain in Skeneboro (presently Whitehall) on the far northern slope of the Hudson Valley to Frederick Philipes and his heirs at Philipsburg in the lower valley in Westchester, resorted to the purchase of African slaves. They purchased them through agents in New York who worked the slave market on the East River as well as traded directly with the sources in the lower South, West Indies and along the African coast. While on a military campaign for the British government in the West Indies, Philip Skene sent a consignment of twenty-two slaves from "Havannah" back to his manor at Skeneboro for his own personal use and future sales.[7] The Philipses, because of their commercial network that had tentacles in various parts of the world, were able to acquire slaves directly from their trade with Madagascar in the Indian Ocean as well as the Guinea Coast of Africa on the Atlantic side.[8]

For virtually most of the eighteenth century oceanic trade in slaves and the internal trade in human flesh in the Hudson-Mohawk region, subjected the slave population to a phenomenal growth rate, especially for a mainland colony which was so unlike those of the Chesapeake and Lower South. To arrive at such a growth rate, New York as a colony had begun to trade directly with Africa for slaves as early as 1748.[9] When the figures of African slave imports are combined with slaves from American sources, the total import of slaves between 1700 and 1774 totals 6,800. But if we overlook this figure for now, what is revealed is that by 1723 the African slave population had already reached 6,171 largely as a result of natural increases. Of that total, 2,395 had been imported from Africa and the West Indies between 1701 and 1726.[10] By 1790, therefore, as a result of such imports and natural increases, the African slave population had increased to approximately 21,324. Thus New York had the largest black population of any colony north of Maryland.[11]

How the slave population breaks down for the Hudson-Mohawk region (especially the Hudson Valley) will be delineated below. But first a few descriptive words about the region, the Hudson Valley in particular. Stretching from the upper regions of Lake Champlain, west to the St. Lawrence River, east along the Mohawk and south to where the Hudson River narrows above Albany, as well as the lower part of the river where at times between Haverstraw and Peekskill it expands to three miles across, the Hudson-Mohawk region is a picturesque, serene and idyllic ecological niche. Endowed by nature with some of the most breath-taking views such as the undulating mountain ranges of the Toconic and Bear, the lumber rich Adirondaks and Catskills of the Appalachian chain, the "Gunks" of the Wallkill Valley, and the Placid and bountiful lakes such as George, Seranac, Placid, Champlain, Saratoga and Mohawk, the region's river and lake valleys are capable of producing cornucopia of agricultural, mineral, animal and marine products. This is especially true for the Hudson, a river that plunges over cataracts above Troy and snakes its way south to meet the ocean at its mouth.

In the Hudson-Mohawk region, conditions for the African population varied from county to county. By the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the largest slave holdings appear to have been in the lower and upper valley where much of the growing of grain, lumbering, manufacturing, and the rearing of commercial livestock took place. Between 1723 and 1771, Albany and Westchester counties had slave populations (and the figure might include some free blacks) of as low as 808 and 448, respectively, in 1723 to as high as 3,877 and 3,430, respectively, in 1771. (Albany at one point included both the present counties of Saratoga and Washington).[12] In 1790 the slave figures increased for Albany County whose slave population then stood at 3,929 out of a total population of 75,921. The city of Albany alone had 572 slaves in 1790 out of a total population of 3,498. On the middle Hudson, Dutchess and Ulster counties held their own in terms of numbers. By 1771 their slave populations were 1,360 and 1,951, respectively, but in 1790 they had jumped to 1,856 and 2,906 respectively, a sizeable increase for the Revolutionary period and for an institution considered to have been in decline in the region at the time. If the figures are examined from the point of view of ratios, it is revealed that 1,746 Africans in Ulster County alone accounted for one of every five inhabitants. In the counties of Albany, Dutchess, Orange and Ulster, it is further revealed that by the end of the Revolutionary period, the African populations in these counties were estimated to have been 5.2%, 4.1%, 5.4%, and 9.9% respectively, of the total population.[13]

During the colonial period, African slaves provided a productive labor force that was important to the economic development of the region. From Lake George and the upper Champlain Valley, to the many farms and mills of the middle and lower Hudson valley whose products fed into the Hudson entrepots of Albany, Troy, Hudson, Catskill, Poughkeepsie, Newburgh, Fishkill Landing (Beacon), and further south to such towns as Peekskill, Haverstraw, Nyack and Tarrytown, African slave labor contributed to the vibrancy of one of the most productive colonial economies in the eighteenth century.[14] Skilled African labor operated the many grist and sawmills that were strung out along the region's interlocking system of streams and rivers. That labor force produced flour and lumber by-products which were shipped to many ports in the Americas and Europe. In the Hudson Valley some of this flour came from the mill of Tjerck DeWitt of Kingston and Hurley, New York. At their mill on the Plattekill, built in 1669, Tjerck and his partner, William de la Montagne, along with their African slave labor, milled a superfine wheat flour that was in great demand throughout the valley and abroad. It also was milled at their Greenkill gristmill in Hurley where the superfine flour was known as "Green Kill." That flour was reputedly sought after by Mrs. George Washington for use at her husband's headquarters in Newburgh, Orange County during the Revolution.[15] In the lower valley at the Philipse's upper mill of Philipsburg on the Pocantico stream, skilled African labor managed both the grist and sawmills.[16] On the Schuyler estate above Albany on the "flats," male slaves cut trees in the winter and, at an adjoining sawmill, cut them into planks, staves and other lumber articles for the West Indian market. Those items were shipped along with the year's production of flour.[17] Further north in the adjacent Mohawk Valley, Sir William Johnson worked skilled and semiskilled slave labor at his sawmill in Montgomery County and in the harvesting of lumber as well as the production of flour.[18] This story of grist and sawmills on adjacent streams, and near other sources of waterpower, being monopolized by manor lords and other proprietors, was replete the length of the Hudson-Mohawk region. Such mills could be found on the manors of Rensselaerswyck, Cortlandt, Livingston, Skenesboro, Johnson Hall in the Mohawk Valley, and on the estates of the Bretts at Fishkill Landing, the Beekmans of Kingston and Rhinebeck, and the Huguenots in the New Paltz area on the Wallkill and Esopus rivers.

In both the manufacturing of iron and river commerce, the presence of skilled and semiskilled African labor along side white wage earners, was instrumental in the increased profitability of those two sectors of the colonial economy. On the northern slopes of the Hudson Valley at Skenesboro, Philip Skene's slaves not only manned scows at the Northern end of Lake Champlain and on various creeks, such as Woods Creek, they also were an integral part of the mining of the ore at Cheever, which was a 600 acre plot called Skene's ore bed, north of Fort Henry. Skene's slaves were also involved in the smelting and forging of iron at Skenesboro on Wood Creek, at, what is described in Skene's memorial as, "a most complete Bloomery for constructing bar iron of four fires and two hammers with its implements . . ."[19] On the Livingston Manor slave labor, working along side white laborers from Connecticut, smelted and forged iron at the Ancram foundry.[20] Philip Livingston's correspondence to his son, Robert, confirms for history that the Lord of the Manor, in the first half of the eighteenth century, had wished to reach the point in his business where he could rely on skilled Africans in the iron works, as his competitors were doing throughout the Hudson Valley and in the adjacent colonies of New Jersey and Pensylvania. Philip's letters speak of the use of Africans at both the forge and smelting. Writing to Robert in January of 1774 about the use of one of his slaves, Dane, with the blacksmith, he anxiously wrote that "I hope you can spare him . . . I must continue to have a negro to learn somewhat ye iron works. I have now 5 at Ancram and want 10 more with a good overseer."[21] On another occasion Philip wrote that he wanted "to buy two negro boys of 16 or 18 years to put to a smith hammer."[22]

With respect to river commerce, African slaves were an ever-present labor force in its growth and development. At many of the entrepots along the Hudson and Mohawk rivers, African labor was an essential ingredient in the mechanism of operation. They stored the bags of wheat in the spacious lofts of the warehouses fronting the rivers, and drove the wagons and sleighs that brought the wheat to market. They operated the tackles that hoisted the bags and other items to be weighed, and probably manned and directed the spouts that conveyed the grain to waiting vessels at dockside. When these sloops edged their way out into the rivers, African slaves were part of the crews that manned the ships down to New York and even on to foreign ports.[23] When one of Frederick Philipse's vessels, the *Margaret*, set sail for Madagascar in June of 1698, it had among its crew at least two known Africans: "Frank, Mr. Cortlands Negro, [a] cooper [and] Maramitta . . . Cook."[24] On board the ship *Experiment* in 1785, when it sailed down the Hudson from Albany on its way to China, was a young black Albany native named Prince, who, upon his return, had amazing tales to tell of a larger world far beyond the Hudson River Valley.[25]

The use of African labor permeated every sector of life in colonial New York. African labor, male and female, bolstered the maintenance of many of the large and small households in the region of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers. Work in those households varied, depending on the number of slaves retained. Not every household had slaves, but those that had from one to three slaves involved them in a regime of work where they worked along side the owner and his family. In the larger holdings, such as those of the Johnsons in the Mohawk Valley and the Morrises on the lower Hudson at Morrissania (in present-day Bronx), Africans were handled by overseers and could range in number from as few as 15-20 to as many as 60 or more as is indicated for the Morris and Johnson families.[26] In many of the households along the rivers and the immediate hinterland, Africans, both male and female, slave and free, filled a variety of labor roles. Women were often found in the kitchen as cooks, cleaning house, washing, caring for their owners' children, and integrally tied to the home production of linens and woolens for family consumption and the colonial markets. Men were waiters, butlers, coachmen and skilled craftsmen such as carpenters, masons, coopers, caulkers, corwinders and wheelwrights. With the rise of commercial livestock in the region, African slave labor was used in the development and maintenance of this vital and highly profitable sector of the colonial economy. In many of the big houses in and around Albany, Poughkeepsie, Johnstown, and Westchester, it was the job of the Africans to visit each room in the cold of winter and the cool of autumn to start the fires in the fireplaces "at stated hours, making the house sparkle with dancing flames."[27] The writings of Mary Humphreys amply sums up the role of African domestics, whose presence enabled others to enjoy the leisure of a master class. Humphreys wrote:

> For every department of the household there was a slave allotted. They hoed, drilled, shod horses, made cider, raised hemp and tobacco [as on the Schuyler estate above Albany at Saratoga (present-day Schuylerville)], looked after the horses and the garden, made and mended the shoes, spun, and wove, made nets, canoes, attended to fishing, carpentering, each household sufficient unto itself.[28]

Much of the above is further complemented by the observations recorded by a late eighteenth century British traveler while on a tour of the Hudson Valley. He wrote:

> Many of the old Dutche farmers in this country, have 20 or 30 slaves about their house. To their care and management everything is left . . . without consulting . . . the master can do nothing . . . [the African] is in fact in general the more intelligent of the two; and so as the master can but exist in the enjoyment of contentment and ease, his is content to become the slave of his slave....[29]

And finally, in support of women assuming management roles on many of the farms in the region, a mid-Hudson paper, in advertising for the sale of a female slave in Hyde Park, Dutchess County, printed that she was one "who understands the management of a dairy and all kinds of housework..."[30]

For the colonial period of Hudson-Mohawk history, there were really two classes: masters and slaves. Even though working class whites were not legally defined as property, because of their economic dependence on the landed aristocracy, their economic status was not dramatically different from that of the African. The poor and working class whites, because they so envied the landed/merchant aristocracy and clung to the separatist ideology of white racism, remained a bulwark against the development of a more inclusive society while protecting the social and economic interests of the master class to the detriment of their own economic welfare. Blinded by white racism, and unable to fathom the why and wherefore of their dehumanization, the white working class stood guard at the gates of the region's "perculiar institution."

During most of the colonial period, African slaves were self-reliant in their attempts to soften the impact of slavery. Interpersonal relations with the master class were functional at best, with slaves accommodating the system until such time as flight and rebellion could be actualized.[31] Some slaves could hope to ameliorate their situation through personal manumission and wills left by deceased masters. There were instances where Africans were listed as sole heirs in wills. Either their names were written into the documents by owners as they lay on their death bed, fearful of what lay beyond, or perhaps there had developed a relationship that was a degree above the simple functional. Whatever the reason, it is questionable whether those Africans named in wills ever received what was bequeathed because of laws against slaves receiving or holding personal property.[32] Nevertheless, in her will dated September 26, 1708, Gritie Hendrix of Kingston not only freed her slave but bequeathed him "one third of [her] house and land in Kingston, a bullock three years old, 12 1/4 pieces of eight..."[33] In the same town William West, in his will of May 28, 1738, willed that "...All the rest of my negroes by name Saser and Betty, his wife and their children, are free. My house and all my land to my negroes Saser and Betty, his wife...and make them heirs of all my estate..."[34] At Point Catherine which was located six miles south of Ticonderoga, Philip Skene built two houses, one of which, according to his chronicler, "was occupied by a Negro couple he had freed..."[35]

Within households female slaves were able to bend proscriptive boundaries to their benefit because of their crucial role in the rearing of their owners' children and the overall maintenance of the home. As recorded in Ms. Grant's *Memoirs*, an African slave mother's influence was not only evident in the rearing of her own children but she was able "sometimes [to] exert fully as much authority over children of the [white] family as the parents...[it was] astonishing...what liberty of speech was allowed to those [slave mothers] who were active and prudent. They [could] chide, reprove, and impostulate in a manner that we would not endure from our hired [white] servants..."[36]

African Americans, in spite of their lost humanity, were capable of retaining elements of their African tradition in face of an awesome process of socialization to European cultural traditions.[37] Every spring throughout the Hudson Valley the Dutch festival of Pinkster was celebrated to commemorate the return of spring. It was always celebrated the seventh Sunday after Easter at Whitsuntide or Pentecost. Over the decades the white settlers gradually allowed the Africans to participate in the events, which by the second half of the eighteenth century had become in fact an African festival through the incorporation of Africanisms derived from African ceremonies such as the "first fruits ceremonies," the installation of African rulers, African religious days, and the coming out ceremony for youngsters newly received into adulthood. Pinkster was all of these, and can best be described as a syncretism of traditions of both African and European; the end result of what John Blassingame describes as a "process of acculturation [wherein] the slaves made European forms serve African functions."[38] Celebrated the length of the valley, Pinkster was most acclaimed in the city of Albany where the festivities lasted for an entire week. Characterized by pomp and pageantry, the ceremonies were reigned over by an African-born slave crowned King Charles from atop *Pinkster Hill* (the site of the present state capital building). In 1811 Pinkster was outlawed by the Albany Common Council.[39]

The general reasoning for outlawing the Pinkster festival was that the "boisterous rioting and drunkenness" of the African celebrants threatened a society where law and order reigned supreme. But an underlying argument is that the city fathers feared the potential power King Charles held over the masses of celebrants. This was especially poignant when one considers that the Council's action followed in the wake of a slave revolt in Louisiana, the Gabriel Prosser conspiracy in 1800, and the Haitian Revolution of Toussaint L'Overture of the late eighteenth century.[40] The city fathers, at any cost, wanted to prevent the rise of a Toussaint or a Gabriel in their midst.

Outlawing a festival by the city fathers was easier than legislating against forced sexual liaisons between owners and their female African slaves. In a society where whites were dominant, and blacks were without real power, white men took liberties with their black female property. Such sexual relationships often resulted in the birth of mulatto children who carried the slave status of their mother.

Slavery was not only dehumanizing and oppressive, but the sex-race tensions made it extremely volatile. Given those factors, it was inevitable that African slaves would frequently resort to flight, rebellion, and other forms of resistance to the institution. The slave codes and the summarily, savage acts of punishment meted out to those Africans who transgressed those codes, were not enough to still the raging desire to be free and in control of their own destiny. Brutal examples of the harsh punishment include: the death of "Negro Jack" by fire for "burning a barne and barrack of wheat in Ulster County in 1732;[41] the April 10, 1710 whipping of the Albany slave of Hermnase Fisher who, for stealing sixpence, was "sentenced to be whipped around the city, at every corner receiving nine lashes on the bare back...;"[42] the 1693 punishment decreed for a Hurley slave "that he be suspended in chains hung by the neck until dead, and then that his throat should be cut;"[43] and the 1741 punishment meted out to suspected conspirators of the infamous alleged "Negro Plot" on the lower Hudson in New York, at which time "thirteen blacks [were] burned to death at the stake..., [and] seventeen black men hanged...."[44] Punishment, though severe, was not enough to extinguish the desire of the slave to be free.

The peaceful and seemingly idyllic Hudson-Mohawk region, was a witness to the shedding of blood of both the victim (African) and the victimizer (slave masters). Slave and master, in a relationship that was impossible to consummate, existed in a perpetual state of undeclared war.

In a series of hangings of Albany slaves, which included: two female slaves--Bet and Deane, the slaves of Philip Van Rensselaer and Volkert A. Douw, respectively, of Albany; and Pompey, a male slave of Matthias Visscher, also of that city, for one of a series of fires that swept Albany, were skirmishes in that undeclared war. For all three, their act of "Black Arson" was a desperate but rebellious move to vent grievances and frustrated hopes built up over time in a system that denied them their humanity; a system that made them "impatient of oppression."[45]

The slave conspiracy of February 18, 1775 in the Kingston area, which involved Africans from the surrounding towns of Hurley, Marbletown and Kingston, was a move to strike a blow for freedom, a potential guerrilla action against a formidable foe. It was a blow for freedom attempted almost to the year before the American Patriots set out on a similar course against the British. The African's blow for freedom, led by two local slaves, was a well planned act of resistance. The conspirators planned to catch the settlers by surprise and kill as many whites as possible. The element of surprise was lost when one of the slavemasters, Johannes Schoomaker, overheard the last minute preparations between the leaders of the conspiracy. The two conspirators, Joe and York, along with about 18 other slaves, were captured and questioned by four magistrates and subsequently imprisoned because of the strong evidence against them. That evidence was the considerable amount of confiscated "powder and shot" found in their possession.[46]

In the same county (Ulster) of the foiled conspiracy, one, Sojourner Truth (then known as Isabella) elected the ultimate choice of flight from bondage. For Sojourner, the picture of what slavery was like remained forever a reality to her. Her childhood remembrances of seeing most of her nine brothers and sisters sold off to other white families, "created an open wound on her heart and became fuel in later years to sustain her desire to be free." The debilitating living conditions to which her slavemasters subjected her, added to the wound and strengthened her desire for freedom.

> Isabella remembered only too clearly the damp, cold cellars of [her slavemaster]. The small windows admitted little light, even on sunny days, and the flagging and

> board floors were invariably cold. The only beds were their strawfilled mattresses, and the older Negroes suffered continually from what Sojourner called the misery.[47]

When one of her five children was sold off by the John I. Dumont family of Ulster Park, Sojourner had had enough of slavery. In the same year that slavery was officially outlawed in New York State (1827), she fled from the Dumonts with her youngest son, Peter, and went into hiding at the Quaker family of Isaac Van Wagener in Dutchess County.[48]

The soil of the valley was stained even further with the blood of the combatants in this undeclared war, when the victimizer himself became the victim. Determined to exercise his so-called legal rights over his property, John Dykeman, tenant on the Livingston Manor, was killed in 1715 by his slave, Ben, for selling the latter's young daughter off the manor to a buyer in New York. Ben, having been used, abused, and dishonored over the years, saw the selling off of his daughter as a sinister, revengeful act on the part of Dykeman, which once again emphasized to him his powerlessness as a man in face of white dominance. Ben chose rebellion rather than continual acquiescence.[49]

Rebellion was also the ultimate for Andries, slave of Jean and Jeremais Van Rensselaer of the manor Renssalaerswyck. Alarmed about Andries' growing will against total domination and depersonalization, Jeremais, in 1696 hurriedly wrote his brother, Jean, in Holland about his problem slave.

> ...you write me to send over the negro Andries, but the friends have advised me against this, saying that it would be nothing but foolishness to try to have him serve you in a free country, as he would be too proud to do that. I have noticed that in his manner. It is bad enough here to get him to do so, so that at times I have to punish him for it...[50]

Escape and flight from slavery was another form of resistance. Numerous notices in colonial newspapers document instances of slaves in the Hudson-Mohawk area who made the choice to escape rather than remain enslaved. Women, because of their offsprings, did not flee as often as men, but they were, nevertheless, noticeable in the advertisements about fugitive slaves. Many of the women fugitives may have been victims of sexual abuse. Maria of Somerstown in Westchester County was perhaps one of those. In an advertisement of April 28, 1813 she was listed as 27 years of age and "...was a good size, and very good looking, with a scar on her breast..."[51] Mary, 13 years of age, and a mulatto from Poughkeepsie, was listed as "rather small for her age...." Susanna and her son Abraham of Poughkeepsie, in 1803 were listed as having run away with a man "...named Peter, a free man who had worked at Mr. Hendrickson and Mr. Baldwin's [in this town]...."[52] And earlier, in 1789, a black male runaway named Ishmael, who was the slave of John Frear of Poughkeepsie, absconded his bondage with all three of his offsprings: "...2 sons, 13 and 6, [and] daughter about 19 months old."[53]

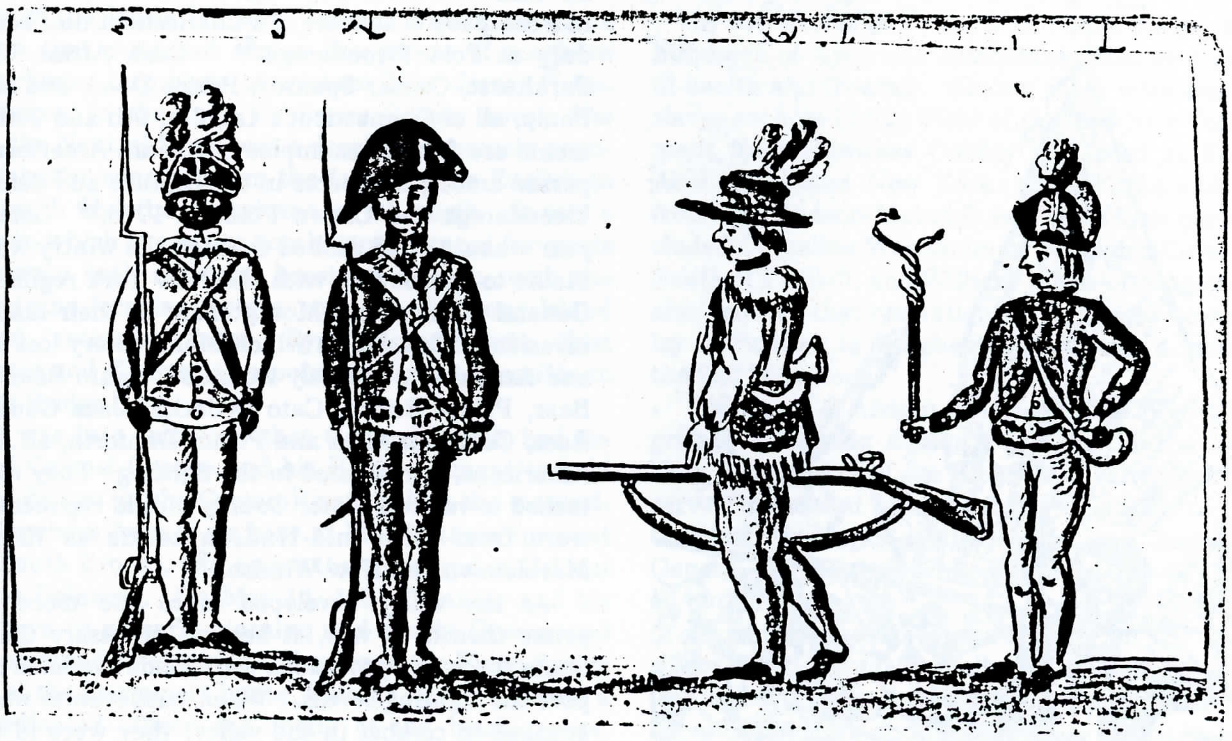
In spite of the dehumanizing nature of slavery, the African was able to soften the impact of the institution through a number of coping mechanisms which included a continuing effort to identify with remnants of his African cultural traditions, and various other forms of resistance. Slavery was an oppressive force, but the African was resilient and in the end, it was the will to be free that prevailed.

THE AFRICAN FACTOR IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Unknowingly the Founding Fathers, when they proclaimed themselves independent of British rule in July of 1776, set in motion elements which would contribute to an intensification of the quest to end slavery. Although Jefferson and his co-conspirators had only white colonialists in mind when they authored the Declaration of Independence, they did not foresee that the thousands of Africans held in bondage would view the declaration and the ensuing war against England as a means to their own freedom.

In the Revolutionary War, some African Americans sided with the British and others sided with the colonists (the same was true of their white American counterparts). In the words of Benjamin Quarles, "insofar as [the African American] had a choice, he was likely to join the side that made him the quickest and best offer in terms of those *unalienable rights* of which Mr. Jefferson had spoken."[54] For the African, the Declaration of 1776 was his call to arms in quest of his own independence and freedom. Caught up in the rhetoric of the Declaration and the spirit of the "natural rights" doctrine, the African moved his undeclared war on the peculiar institution to that of an open campaign against the evil shroud of slavery in the region. For him, "whoever invoked the image of liberty, be he American or British, could count on a ready response from the [Blacks]" to volunteer for the war effort.[55]

Free Africans were attracted by the offer of land and a cash bounty, and the chance to be adventuresome and "express support for the revolutionary ideals of freedom."[56] Runaways viewed enlistment as a means of security, employment and eventual freedom. Slaves were left to the whims of their slavemasters



VERGER'S DRAWINGS OF AMERICAN FOOT SOLDIERS, YORKTOWN CAMPAIGN, 1781. LEFT TO RIGHT: BLACK LIGHT INFANTRYMAN OF THE FIRST RHODE ISLAND REGIMENT, MUSKETEER OF THE SECOND CANADIAN REGIMENT, RIFLEMAN, AND GUNNER OF THE CONTINENTAL ARTILLERY

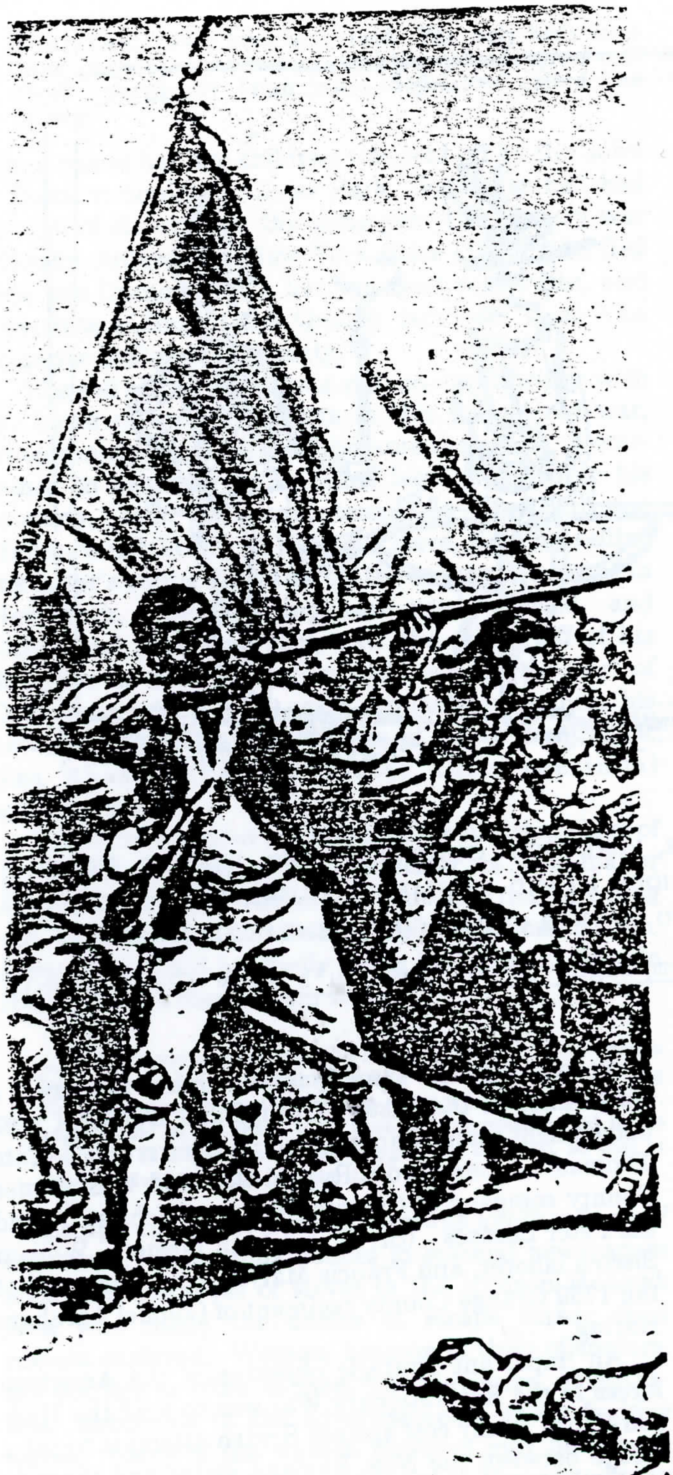
- From the Book, The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army (Princeton)

who, if they so desired, could send the slave(s) in place of themselves or accept cash or a land bounty. For the Africans, free or enslaved, the revolution would also afford them the opportunity to demonstrate their prowess as combatants and as men, something they were denied in a slave society which defined them as infantile, sambo and untrustworthy.

African American participation in colonial wars did not begin with the American Revolution. Decades before the Revolutionary War, African Americans fought in colonial wars under the Dutch and the British. In their conflicts with the Indians, the Dutch, under their Governor Peter Styvesant, sought "clever and strong" Africans. In a request to officials on the Caribbean island of Curacao, Styvesant stated that he needed such men to "pursue the Indians," adding it is "evident that in order to possess this country...we shall be forced into a lawful offensive war against them [the Indians]."[57]

Both free and enslaved Africans fought under the British in campaigns in New York during the French and Indian War. Among the black enlistees were Peter Lucas and Peter Primus in the 1762 Schenectady company of Captain Van Dyck;[58] John Murray, a cordwainer in the Ulster, Orange and Dutchess 1762 detachment under Captain George Brewerton;[59] Cato Thomas, a laborer from Rye, in the 1760 Westchester County company of Captain William Gilchrist;[60] and the Peter Lucases (Sr. & Jr.) both farmers, William Sisco a laborer, and Francis Matysa, cordwainer, all of the 1759 Orange County regiment of Colonel Abraham Hering.[61]

An important strategic objective of the American forces in the Revolutionary War was to hold the Hudson Valley at any cost against British attempts to cut a wedge between the New England states and those to the west of the Hudson River. The job of ensuring valley security fell to the forces of the Northern Army under, first, General Philip Schuyler, and later, under Haratio Gates, and the forces of the Valley Command under Major General William Heath and others. Integrated among the forces were African Americans from the valley, many from regiments in New England and New Jersey, and various southern units. Their presence predated the official acknowledgment of the use of African Americans in the revolutionary struggle.[62]



Peter Salem fought at Fort Ticonderoga

When Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys, along with Benedict Arnold, made their dash to the northern slopes of the valley in the region of Lake Champlain to capture Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point in 1775, African Americans were among the regimental ranks.[63] Barzillai Lew of the Twenty-Seventh Massachusetts Regiment and Lemuel Haynes in a company of soldiers of a Connecticut unit both saw duty at Fort Ticonderoga.[64] Cash Africa, Caesar Parkhurst, Caesar Spensor, Prince Done, and Samuel Pomp, all of Connecticut's 1st, 6th, 9th and 10th regiments are further examples of African Americans dispersed among the forces in the capture and defense of Ticonderoga and Crown Point in 1775.[65] Later that year when Arnold dashed through the wintry woods of Maine to rendezvous with the New York regiments of General Clinton and Montgomery in their disastrous invasion of Canada, in which Montgomery lost his life and Arnold was severely wounded, Adam Baer, Cuffy Baer, Prince Briant, Cato Dederick, Jack Gaul, Jack Rosa, Cato Van Aken and Prince Danforth, all African Americans, participated in the fighting. They were attached to various Ulster County militia regiments, and were from such mid-Hudson towns as Kingston, Marbletown and New Windsor.[66]

As the valley developed more and more into a prime theatre of war, it became necessary that adequate space and provisions were made available to support the fighting forces. When battle units were not engaged in combat in the valley, they were in winter quarters. Above Peekskill, which was the general command post for the valley forces, Continental Village sprang up to not only quarter the troops but to supply them with materiel. Peekskill, in addition to being the general command post, and because of its advantageous location at the foothills of the Highlands, had the unenviable role of protecting the passes in the region against British intrusion.

Conneticut fighting units wintered, at times (1780/1781), in Conneticut Village located above the Tory estate of Beverly Robinson, "opposite West Point, about one mile and half from the river...[and in what is today Putnam County]."[67] Further south and southeast at Philipsburg and White Plains, respectively, Continental forces bivouaced and wintered. To help shore up the American's position in this war theatre, Blacks assumed an array of military roles in addition to combatant. They were drivers, orderlies, waiters, cooks and bakers (especially at Tarrytown, Continental Village and up at Fishkill where there were numerous ovens for baking bread), skilled craftsmen and common laborers.[68] Many also were engaged at New Windson on the "works," which was a point on the river where the hugh iron chain, manufactured at Sterling Iron Works in Orange County, was assembled in sections and floated down to West Point. There its length of 500 yards was laid across the Hudson to prevent British ships from ascending the Hudson.[69]

African Americans in the First Regiment of Rhode Island, under the command of Colonel Christopher Greene, were a viable force in keeping the British guerrilla group, the "Cowboys," at bay in the Neutral

Zone of the lower Hudson Valley. This zone was a region that stretched across the extent of southern Westchester into parts of western New Jersey.[70] Immortalized in the John Fenimore Cooper novel, *The Spy*, the Neutral Zone was a desolated, sparsely populated buffer zone between the forces of the English to the south and the Americans to the north. It was a zone in which the major combatants foraged for goods to sustain both men and beasts of burden, with the Americans foraging from a point on the Long Island Sound "extending from Rye, Mamaroneck, East Chester and Chester to a point as close as possible to Kings Bridge."[71]

It was into this zone that General Heath had ordered Colonel Greene and his Black regiment to hold Pines Bridge on the Croton River against the marauding Cowboys from their base at Morrisiannia (present day South Bronx), and under the command of Colonel James Delancey. On May 14, 1781 Delancey and his Cowboys, in an early morning raid caught Greene and his command by surprise and overran the Pines Bridge post at the Davenport house, killing Colonel Greene, a subordinated officer and many of the black troops. Yet, before they fell, history records that they "defended their beloved Col. Greene so well that it was only over their dead bodies that the enemy reached and murdered him...."[72] These were America's unsung heroes from the Hudson River Valley.

The dishonorable deed of General Benedict Arnold is told in the annals of history as well as the capture and hanging of his co-conspirator Major John Andre in the attempted selling of plans to West Point to the British.[73] But unsung is the heroic deed of the African American soldier, Jacob Peterson of Cortland in Westchester. As a sentry stationed at Croton Point on the Hudson, it was, "ironically, the sharpshooting of [sentry] Peterson that [forced Andre to seek escape overland through Westchester rather than down the Hudson by ship and] ultimately [his] capture" and hanging in October of 1780.[74]

Also unsung are the exploits of African American Pompey Lamb. General "Mad" Anthony Wayne's successful capture of Stony Point, then held by British forces, was a result of Pompey's ability to move unsuspectingly between his master's home and the fort to sell fresh fruits and vegetables, and at the appropriate time acquire from the British guards on duty the secret password. Using the password, "the fort is ours," Pompey was among the point-men who overpowered the sentries which led to Gen. Wayne's 1,350 continentals, which included many African Americans, successful capture of Stony Point on July 16, 1779.[75]

In the winter of 1777-78 at Valley Forge, literally hundreds of American combatants died as a result of ill-health and freezing. Among those were the sons of slaves such as Phillip Field of the 2nd New York Regiment from Dutchess County who died at Forge.[76] Also in the 2nd New York were blacks and whites from the Hudson-Mohawk region. These persons included Cornelius Woodmore of Sedman's Cove, Henry Smith of Fishkill, and William White of Kingston. It is also believed that revolutionary pensioner Lewis Bradley of Pawling in Dutchess County was a member of the 2nd New York.[77]

The deeds of African Americans like Henry Randal, private in Captain Aorson's Company of the 3rd New York Regiment, and Joe Ripley of Albany County, who served in the 3rd Massachusetts Regiment of Colonel Greaton, and was at the battles and surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga in October of 1777, are all but forgotten.[78]

In addition to the early exploits on the northern slopes of the Hudson Valley in the region of Lake Champlain and in the capture of Stony Point, African Americans fought and died at White Plains in 1776; in the numerous skirmishes at Horseneck/Greenwich within the Neutral Zone; the Burgoyne/Gates campaigns of Bennington, Stillwater and Memis Heights; the 1777 defeat of General St. Ledger's forces by General Herkimer in the Mohawk Valley; in the western campaigns along the Mohawk against the Indians and British forces of Sir John Johnson; and many other conflicts including the surrender of British forces at Saratoga in October of 1777.[79]

In a calculated attempt to gain their freedom from slavery, some African Americans, like other Loyalists, joined the British side. The thousands of Blacks who, in Virginia, heeded the declaration of Lord Dunmore, and those in the Hudson River region who heeded a similar declaration of Sir Henry Clinton from his Westchester headquarters in 1779, responded to "whoever invoked the image of liberty" that would guarantee their freedom.[80]

In the Hudson Valley, in addition to unnamed Blacks who manned the British Negro Fort on the point east of Kingsbridge in the vicinity of New York City, there were the many African-Americans who, because they were familiar with the back country and knew the rivers and stream beds well, guided fellow Loyalists across American lines to British held territory.[81] Pompey and James Week, both slaves, were apprehended in attempting to reach British lines and were sent to the "works" at New Windsor.[82] Jonathan, a mulatto, had conspired to convey "draft dodgers" from the Poughkeepsie/Beekman Precinct area to Long Island.[83] A "Negroe" was found to have conducted loyalists and any others wishing to join up with the British, "through the woods in Westchester County crossed Croton River, at a point three miles above the bridge, into British held territory."[84]

In a 1777 letter to Pierre Van Cortlandt in Poughkeepsie, it was reported that "a mulatto wench has lately passed through this place from New York; she brought intelligence to the inhabitants from their friends in New York, and in all probability she had gone to Burgoyne's army..."[85] Even the foiled attempt of the Cortlandt's female slaves to reach the British lines under the leadership of Bridget, was perhaps a response to Sir Clinton's proclamation.[86]

The African known as Colonel Cuff, and who at times commanded the British Negro Fort, had responded to that invoked "image of liberty" from the British.[87] Preferring to seek ultimate freedom through the English rather than through the Americans, Colonel Cuff, when not at his command post in the Negro Fort, probably combined his regimental efforts with those of Delancey's Cowboys in the Neutral Zone.[88] Cuff and his men were part of Sir Clinton's Ethiopian Regiment operating in the Neutral Zone as an advanced guard. The twenty or so Blacks among Rodgers' Rangers posted at King's Bridge were part of that advanced guard as well.[89]

THE END OF SLAVERY AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE 19th CENTURY FREE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

The Revolutionary War ended British oppression in America for whites, but Black New Yorkers, in spite of their contributions to the war effort, had to wait more than two decades before slavery in the state was finally ended. For some of those who participated in the war, freedom was their reward, and if they preservered, they received the long awaited land bounty.[90] Many of those who fought with the British were evacuated out of ports like New York and Staten Island for the West Indies and Nova Scotia in Canada. The Hessians even kept their promise to evacuate their African supporters, with a Brunswick contigent under Baron Von Riedesel of the Burgoyne Conventional Army, evacuating its corps of black drummers back to Germany.[91] An African known only as Tone, who was freed from his bondage by his slavemaster, John Warring, because of his service in the revolutionary cause, went on to develop a prosperous business in boat rentals to fishermen and the operation of a tavern on a pond named after him in Dutchess County.[92] But Tone and others like him were few; the majority had to wait until the passage of the Gradual Emancipation Act of 1799, which freed all newborns of slave mothers on July 4 of that year. But the law required that the newborns remain the servants of the "master or mistress of the mother---the male children until they reached the age of 27, and the females to the age of 25, provided the master or mistress caused the children to be taught to read the holy scriptures previous to their becoming 21 years of age...."[93]

Slavery in New York was abolished with finality through legislation on July 4, 1827.[94] The event was hailed with celebrations around the state. In Albany, on July 5, 1827, a great procession led by what the *Albany Argus and City Gazette* described as "African bands and Marshals," and followed by "state officers, the Judiciary, Senate, members of Congress, members of Cincinnati, revolutionary worthies and citizens," edged its way up State Street and along several other principal streets to the Second Baptist Church on Hamilton Street.

In the pulpit to give the oration was the Reverend Nathaniel Paul, pastor of what the *Argus* described as "the African congregation in this city."[95] With the crowd spilling over into Hamilton Street, Reverend Paul was overwhelmed by the spectacle before him. Bright colorful banners could be seen around the church, and they bore the names "of distinguished men whose efforts [had] been directed towards the extinction of slavery, and the amelioration of the conditions of those who [had] been the subjects of it."[96] For Reverend Paul, it was fitting that such a celebration took place in Albany: a city and county in which the peculiar institution was second in New York in the number of slaves held, and the city in which the state legislature finally outlawed what it had for years so fervently protected.

Personal freedom did not bring economic and political freedom nor social acceptability. The first half of the nineteenth century brought somewhat of a new challenge for Blacks in the Hudson-Mohawk region. Shorn of their slave shackles, Blacks would have to contend with a growing socioeconomic and political ostracism, particularly intense following the entrance into the valley of waves of European immigrants. The advent of large numbers of poor white immigrants, competing for jobs traditionally held by Blacks, led to increased racial tension and sometimes violence. As racism became more and more a factor, Blacks found themselves in an intolerable predicament. With many families still attached to their former slavemasters, and with others scratching out a bare existence from the land, many more were driven to become day-laborers moving from farm to farm or work project to work project. William Strickland's observation of free Blacks in the vicinity of Albany and Saratoga speaks to the socioeconomic blight that had descended upon many of them in the Hudson Valley:

> ...They lead the life of Indians, cultivating a little mays [maize], but living chiefly on the woods...[and] are unable to bring up their families; they spend in the summer what they earn, and in the winter are in want and must be supported by their neighbors....Their families in

> general are numerous, and their children though naked and neglected, they will not suffer to go from home to work. In the vale of Saratoga and other parts of the country I have met with families of negroes bearing much the same character.[97]

Not all Blacks in the Hudson Valley and its environs fit the description in Strickland's observations of those in the pine forest west of Albany. Although many remained attached to their former slave masters estate or home, many either began little independent Black or mixed communities on the periphery of major urban areas, or they migrated to the cities and towns to be near an array of job possibilities as well as larger bodies of Black residents.

During the first fifty years of the nineteenth century, Black residential patterns became discernible. In most areas, it was difficult to define Blacks as being concentrated in one general area as in New York City. Although some rural Black communities were limited to marginal land, African Americans were, in general, dispersed among white residents.

In Albany prior to 1840, there was a general clustering of pockets of Black concentration east of Eagle Street and south of State and with pockets of concentration also in the Arbor Hill area, two areas in which white residents could also be found. By 1850, there had been a clear shift away from the Eagle-State Streets and Arbor Hill areas to a more widely dispersed pattern.[98]

In Poughkeepsie during the first half of the century, Blacks were located in three defined clusters: "...on the fringes of the central business district bounded by Washington and Market Streets where some working class whites and recently arrived German immigrants also resided; second, on 'Long Row' by the Almshouse; third, in the area of Catherine, Cottage, and Pine Streets."[99]

On the periphery of some towns in the region, well defined but dispersed concentrations of Blacks could be found. They were in the Slote (Sparkill) region on the western bank of the Hudson where the Sparkill Creek empties into that river below Nyack;[100] the Skunk Hallow community on the Palisades where New York meets Jersey;[101] and among various other mixed mountain peoples in the Hudson Valley region such as those of the Ramapo (Jackson Whites) west of Nyack and of Eagle's Nest near Hurley.[102]

There were two communities that sprang up in the late 18th and early 19th centuries on what could be considered marginal land. Both of those communities were located close to concentrations of prospective white employers. One was known as "The Hills" and was located in the lower Hudson Valley "on the rugged land north of Saint Mary's (Silver Lake) where Harrison, White Plains and North Castle are joined."[103] The other was located in Dutchess County near Poughquay and is attributed to Charles Freeman, its founder, whose land holdings stretched to West Pawling.[104] Both communities, because they were located on hilly, marginal land, were referred to as "Nigger Hill" by white outsiders. The Black insiders often referred to their community as "Guinea Town."[105]

In Rockland County another prominent African American during this period was John Moore of Orangetown (Piermont), the town's first industrialist. By 1800 Moore was already operating his own saw and grist mills, and by 1815 had added the ownership of a carding to his holdings which employed 15 people. Moore also produced wheels for grinding and water power from stone taken from what is known today as the "mine hole."[106]

Although individuals like John Moore, Charles Freeman and others were able to make some economic headway, they nevertheless had to contend with what many northern Blacks referred to as a racial caste system. However, Blacks in the Hudson-Mohawk region and its environs were not content to sit by calmly, content with "jubilee day" while the few gains they had achieved were under attack. They began to fight to insure that guarantees written into the New York Constitution of 1777 would apply equally to white and Black alike. At the same time, they were somewhat disturbed by the inequities written into the Constitution at the Constitutional Convention of 1821 held in Albany.

The post-1821 Constitution required that Blacks own $250 worth of property to be eligible to vote. That restriction did not apply to whites. As a result, New York Blacks launched a determined campaign of petitions to the legislature. The petition drive, however, did not achieve its purpose. It was not until 1870, and the passage of the 15th Amendment to the Federal Constitution, that Blacks in New York gained equal access to the franchise.

But until then, with Blacks viewed by the Democrats as a tool of the Federalists/Whig/aristocratic political faction, the African Americans who could vote were singled out by the Democrats as a potential obstacle to their political supremacy around the state. The Democrats were well aware of past elections where, as a result of a colorless franchise written into the 1777 Constitution, the Black vote had the potential of determining election outcomes. It happened in 1800 where the vote of a single "negro ward" won the election for the Federalists; again in 1813 where "votes of 300 free negroes in New York City decided the election and swept the Federalists into power and determined the character of the State Legislature;" and, as the

Democrats found out between 1830 and 1840, the Black vote carried the contest against Tammany in the fifth and eighth wards in New York.[107]

To prevent such occurrences, Democrat-controlled constitutional conventions submitted referenda for equal suffrage to the New York Electorate which it (white voters) repeatedly voted down (1826, 1846, 1860, 1869).[108] But New York Blacks were unrelenting in their efforts . And even though the three years residency and $250 in property as requirements for the vote prevented many Blacks from exercising the right to vote, it did not deter them from their goal of a non-biased franchise and full American citizenship.

Using the convention strategy, combined with numerous petitions and resolutions, the Black leadership not only brought the voting rights question into public focus, it also combined that fight with a host of other ante-bellum Black concerns such as the abolition of slavery, anti-colonization, education, economic development, and the overall condition of the African-American community in New York State and the country.

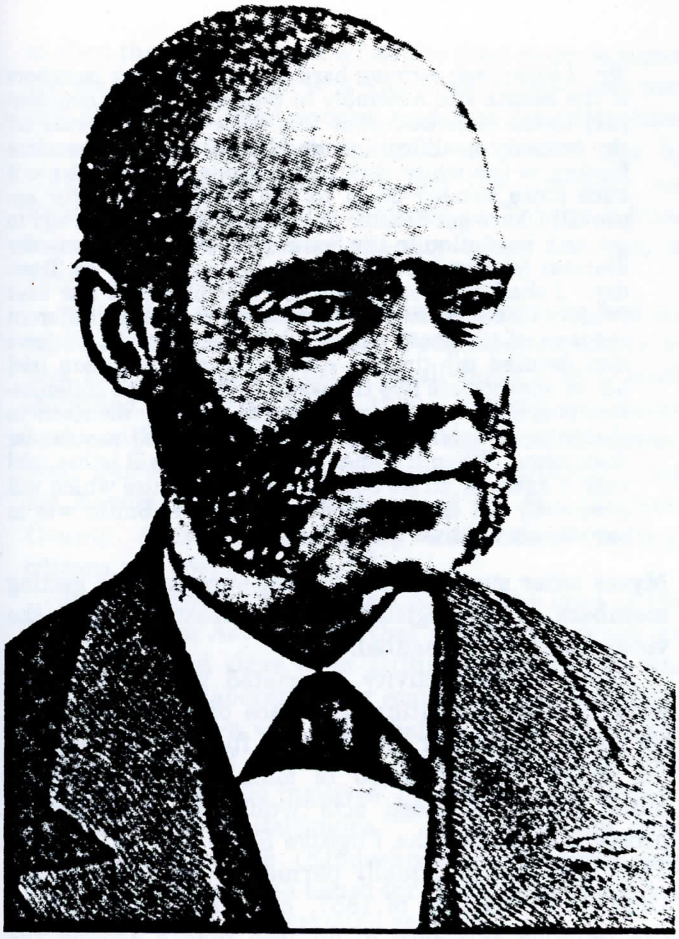
Prior to the 1840s the convention strategy was a movement in which many whites were visible, and was identified with the Garrisonian strategic approach of moral suasion and nonviolence. The moral suasionist did not view suffrage as a priority.[109] In due time, "political abolitionism" rose to challenge the Garrisonian strategy. Interestingly, the Hudson-Mohawk region produced many of those African American leaders who immersed themselves in the fight for African-American suffrage, abolitionism, and full Black citizenship through the convention movement.

The first "National Negro Conventions" of the 1830s were attended by men from the Hudson region with none from the Mohawk. Men such as George Richardson and David Ruggles of Poughkeepsie, Charles Smith and William P. Johnson of Newburgh, William Rich of Troy, John G. Stewart of Albany (selected second vice-president), and Henry Simpkins of Hudson and Catskill were all in attendance at the 1833 convention in Philadelphia.[110] Two subsequent national conventions held before the end of the 1830s saw the region's delegation increase to include such men as Nathan Blout and Jared Gray of Poughkeepsie, Robert Jackson of Catskill (Henry Simpkins had moved to New York), Charles S. Morton, along with Stewart again, from Albany, all attended the 1834 convention in New York; and in 1835, when the convention returned to Philadelphia, with only a Troy delegation headed by William Rich (who would remain an active convention attendee up to 1864) and newcomers William M. Livezeley and Clarence Seldon.[111]

In time, all of the convention delegates mentioned above would be considered representative of the "old guard,"; they had been born in the region or had arrived early in the century. In the decade of the 1840s, these earlier Black leaders were challenged and joined by men, and later women, who represented a new militancy and came from a wider sweep of the Hudson-Mohawk region. Among these were such personalities as T. Woodson, James Fountain and B.S. Anderson, all of Utica from which others would come during the ante-bellum period; John Wendall of Schenectady (and in whose city the "Annual Convention of Colored Citizens" was held in September of 1844 and 1846); Norris Lee from Watertown; and Enoch Moore from Little Falls. From the Hudson Valley were such notables as William H. Johnson, William H. Topp and Stephen Myers of Albany; Henry Highland Garnet and his associate, G.H. Baltimore, of the Liberty Street Presbyterian Church of Troy, and W.H. Decker of Newburgh in Orange County; and Samuel Ringgold Ward, Isaac Deyo and A. Boulden of Poughkeepsie, and Walter K. Mower of Armenia, all residents of Dutchess County.[112]

These new leaders from across the Hudson-Mohawk region came from all walks of life: artisans, cooks, common laborers, and professionals. Two among them were Henry Highland Garnet of Troy and Samuel Ringgold Ward of Poughkeepsie, whose leadership roles in the convention era of the 1840s reflected the multifaceted nature of black talent. Garnet, described by Frederick Douglass (with whom Garnet clashed as to the appropriate liberation strategy for Blacks) as "the ablest thinker on his legs...," began his teaching and ministerial duties in Troy.[113] A graduate of both the African Free School in New York and the Oneida Institute in the western part of the state, Garnet became a moving force at Liberty Street Negro Presbyterian Church of Troy beginning in 1840, and from which he published and distributed his small periodical, *The Clarion*. The publication was intended to "aid the negro in all aspects of his emancipation."[114] Up until 1847 Garnet associated himself with William G. Allen, also of Troy, and Allen's periodical, *The National Watchman*.[115]

Garnet represented a new generation of African orators who took center stage in the 1840s in espousing a new militancy in the fight for full citizenship. "He was one of a number of young men caught in a generational break with older leaders who espoused caution in the struggle for racial freedom."[116] Garnet emphasized the need for "militancy and greater independence from white abolitionists."[117] With Troy as his base throughout the 1840s (a city in which national and state Black conventions were held), but with Albany as the fulcrum of the debate on Black liberation, Garnet's leadership brought many Blacks into the abolition movement and in turn new followers of the Liberty, and later, the Free Soil political parties.[118]



Henry Highland Garnet

Garnet is most often remembered for his famous speech at the "National Convention of Colored Citizens," held in Buffalo in 1843. In that speech, Garnet called on slaves to take up arms against their oppressors. In his "Address to the Slaves," Garnet admonished, "Brethren, arise arise! Strike for your lives and liberties, - Rather die freemen than live to be slaves...."[119] It was a memorable statement, and it put Garnet squarely at the center of the abolition struggle, but in Buffalo and again at the Troy convention of 1847, Garnet's militancy would lose out to Frederick Douglass' "more diplomatic or palliative policy."[120]

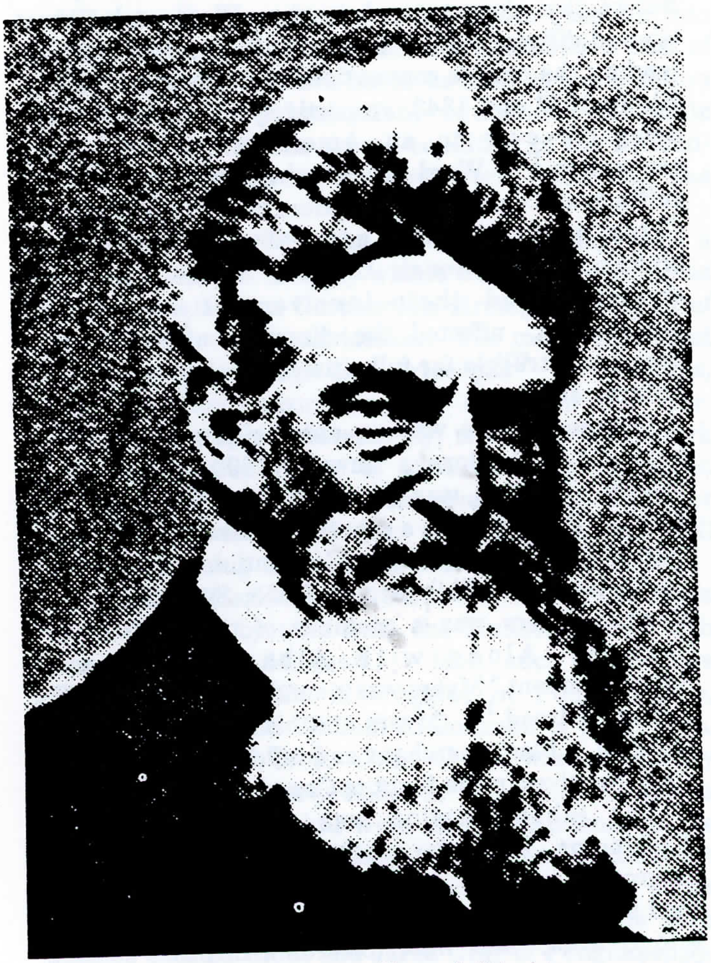
Samuel Ringgold Ward, also a product of the African Free School began his illustrative career, as Garnet had done, engaged as a teacher of Black students in a Lancasterian school in Poughkeepsie.[121] Ironically, 1839, the year he began his teaching duties, was the same year Garnet began his in Troy. In May of 1839, Ward was "licensed to preach the gospel by the New York Congregational Association assembled at Poughkeepsie."[122] In his description of Ward, Frederick Douglass stated that "in depth of thought, fluency of speech, readiness of wit, logical exactness, and general intelligence, [he] has left no successor among the colored men amongst us." Ward was also a vehement opponent of slavery. In the same year that he was accepted into the ministry, Ward became an agent for both the American and the New York Anti-Slavery societies.[123]

Ward and Garnet were both involved in the convention movement and the political abolitionist movement. They were supporters of the Liberty and Free Soil political parties. It was from Poughkeepsie that he attended the founding of the Liberty Party in Albany in 1840. Commenting on his early involvement in the Liberty Party, Ward stated that "I then became for the first time a member of a political party; with it I cast my first vote; to it I devoted my political activity; with it I lived my political life - which terminated when eleven years subsequently I left the country."[124] Before that departure, however, Ward and Garnet labored diligently for the Liberty Party, with both attending the party's conventions in Rochester and Buffalo in 1842 and 1843, respectively, as the first Black delegates ever to an American political party convention.[125] Ward also fought diligently for Black suffrage and equal access to education. Both Ward and Garnet represented that new militant breed of Black orators, who through the use of the convention strategy, and their involvement in political abolitionism, affected the direction of the African American struggle for full citizenship during the ante-bellum period.

Stephen Myers was an ante-bellum Black leader from Albany. Born a slave in 1800 in Rensselaer County, Stephen was owned by the family of "Dr. Eights." Prominent as a representative from Albany to four of the National Negro Conventions (Troy, 1847; Rochester, 1853; Philadelphia, 1855; Syracuse, 1864), Stephen Myers was a member of the Anti-Slavery Society. Along with Albany's "General Superintendent," Myers was a conductor on the underground railroad.[126] Myers and his assistant, William H. Topp, a Black merchant and tailor in Albany, aided many fugitives in the flight to Canada.

The Albany station was on the route from Washington, D.C., the southern terminus of the underground railroad. At Albany the underground railroad stretched east into New England, and both north into Canada, and west towards Utica and beyond. North of Albany, at Troy, where many slaves took refuge after their trek along the Hudson River, Myers' conductor's role was duplicated by other Black leaders like Henry Highland Garnet and Martin I. Towesend. From Troy, fugitives were "supplied with money and forwarded either to Suspension Bridge, on the Niagara River, or by way of Vermont and Lake Champlain to Rouse Point" on the Canadian border in Clinton County.[127]

In the western part of the Hudson-Mohawk region, the underground system was fed by a spur from Petersboro (home of Gerrit Smith) in Central New York, running through Oswego to Cape Vincent in Jefferson County at the mouth of the St. Lawrence. From Cape Vincent, fugitives were then ferried across to Canada, and with many settling in adjacent towns like Watertown and Ogdensburg in Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties.[128] Under the leadership of Myers and others like John G. Steward, Topp, and William H. Matthews, many of the fugitives out of Albany and Troy were settled on land owned by Gerrit Smith in the vicinity of the North Elba home of John Brown, located in Essex County.[129]



John Brown - militant abolitionist

In addition to his efforts on behalf of the underground railroad, Stephen Myers was a lobbyist for the New York Anti-Slavery Society, as well as, by 1856, the publisher of "two short lived abolitionist sheets: *The Elevator* in 1842, followed ten years later by *The Telegraph*," and his underground railroad tract *Circular to the Friends of Freedom*.[130] In his March 22, 1856 correspondence to Gerrit Smith in the New York office of the Anti-Slavery Society, Myers wrote of his efforts with the State Legislature:

> Sir I have been striving hard this winter with members of the Senate and Assembly to recommend an amendent [sic] to the constitution of this state so as to strike off the property qualifications and lets us vote on the same footing as the white mail [sic] citizens. So as to have it once more handed down to the people [voters for approval] I have got Senitor [sic] Cuyler some weeks ago to get up a resolution in the Senat [sic] which is now under discusin [sic] and will come up again Monday or Tuesday. I shall have one up in the assembly in a few days [which] I have received from colored men from different sections of the state which I have presented... I have also devoted my time to defeat the collensisation [sic] bill to appropriate five thousand dollars to the collenisation [sic] Society -- I have gotten about sixty members to pledge to go against it in a final vote, it [is] now under discussion. When it comes up again they will iether [sic] vote it down or strike out the enacting clause which will eventually kill the bill....I have since Mr. Smith was in our city six fugitives from Maryland.[131]

Myers letter suggests that he was successful in getting members of the legislature to at least listen to the views that he represented.

Much of the activity associated with the underground railroad continued in face of severe penalties for anyone aiding, or comforting a fugitive, or interfering in the apprehension of such persons. Persons found guilty of those acts would be subjected to prosecution under the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850.[132] That law, and its equally pernicious counterpart, the Dred Scott Decision of 1857, completely undermined the tenuous existence of all free Blacks around the state, sending many communities fleeing into Canada.[133]

In spite of the legal setbacks, many abolitionists and their supporters--white and Black, continued their attempts to aid the fugitives. Abolitionists in the Hudson-Mohawk region succeeded in the rescue of numerous fugitive slaves from the hands of Federal Marshals. Two such known cases took place at Troy and Poughkeepsie.

In Troy, in 1860, there was a successful rescue of Charles Nalle, a reputed escaped slave from Culpepper County, Virginia. On April 27, 1860, and after about two years residence in the area working as a teamster in the town of Sandlake and recently for a Mr. Uri Gilbert in the city of Troy as a coachman, Nalle was apprehended by a Federal Marshal. Quickly brought before a judge and confirmed as an escaped slave, Nalle was being prepared for transport out of Troy when a large crowd broke into the jail and wisked him across the Hudson to West Troy. On that side he was recaptured but was shortly afterwards successfully retaken from his captors and placed in a wagon and driven out of town on Shaker Road by Hank York and another Black man known as Parker.

Although more than a hundred Blacks took part in the rescue, *The Troy Daily Times* highlighted a "somewhat antiquated colored woman" who was posted to alert the rescuers; and when the time came to signal the start of the rescue was "the most conspicuous person opposed to legal course" and was heard to have shouted "give us liberty or give us death!" and by "vehement gesticulations" urged the rescuers on. Eventually Charles Nalle returned to Troy as a freed man after benefactors in the city raised the sum of $1,000 as purchase price.[134]

The other case involved John Bolding who had escaped from South Carolina to Poughkeepsie where he had married and started a small tailor's shop until identified and arrested in 1860. Bolding was taken back south to once again endure the peculiar institution, but eventually had his freedom purchased from his slavemaster with funds raised by the Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society and other leadings citizens at a cost of $1,700.[135]

In Kinderhook, Columbia County, the laws of the Fugitive Slave Act touched that community when an alleged escaped slave from Baltimore, Maryland was identified as a laborer in the employ of General Whiting. The fugitive was taken before Judge Vandepoel where a writ of ownership and extradiction were issued to permit the fugitives' owner, Richard Dorsey, to return him to Baltimore.[136] Not even the most out-of-the-way place (Kinderhook) could completely shield the fugitive who hoped for freedom as a result of a journey on the underground railroad.

Even free Blacks, many of whom fled to Canada in fear of bounty hunters, were not safe from the consequences the law wrought: indiscriminant bounty hunters or whites set on making a fast buck through the kidnaping and sale of freemen to slave holders in the South. One such individual who got caught in this web was Solomon Northrup of Saratoga Springs, who in 1841 was convinced that the two men who encouraged him to join their troupe as a short-term musician were legitimate. Instead, he was kidnaped and sold into slavery in Louisiana where he spent twelve years until rescued by New York authorities.[137]

In the mid-Hudson region, at what was then referred to as Fishkill Landing (Beacon), a fugitive slave from Baltimore, James Brown, was successful in avoiding the long arm of the law. Befriended by the Guilian Verplanck family of that town, Brown went to work for them in the early 1820s and eventually was able to purchase his freedom and that of his wife, Julia, from their slavemaster. An experienced gardener, Brown is credited with the development of the elaborate gardens that surrounded the Verplanck house and the bountiful fields fronting the property on the east bank of the Hudson River. He was also one of the first Blacks in Fishkill Landing to qualify for the vote in 1837.[138]

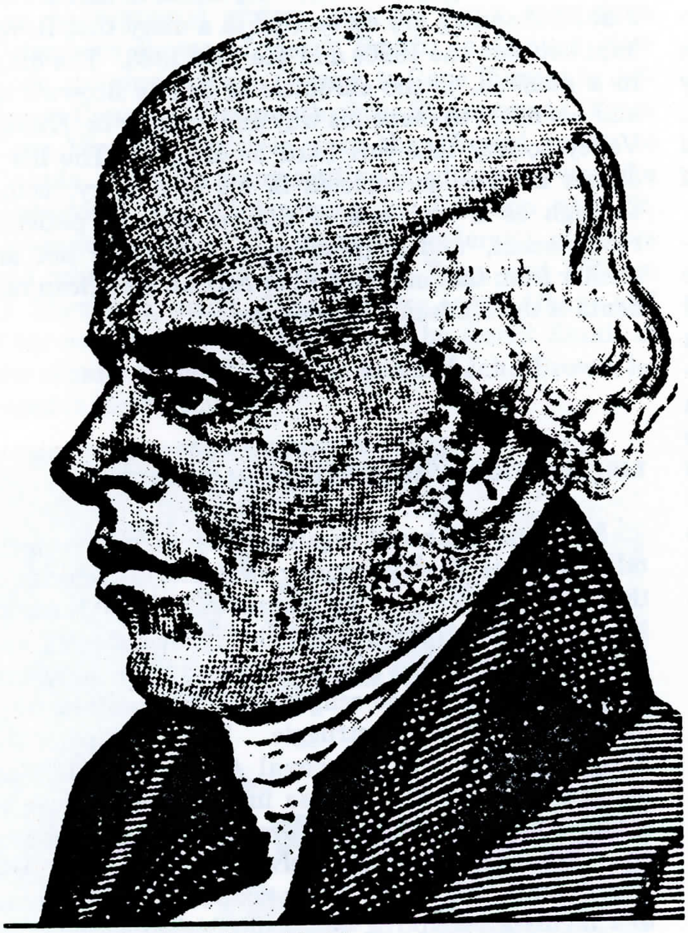
The years spent with the Verplancks in and around Fishkill Landing are chronicled in a diary that Brown kept between the 1820s and the year 1863. The diary, in a nutshell, is the chronicle of James Brown's life and his effort to make his way and prosper in Hudson Valley society that was hard on Blacks. The life of James Brown, as depicted in his own diary, comes through as a real tale of the rewards of patience, resoluteness, and aggressiveness. A story not dissimilar from that of many other African American residents of the Hudson Valley region.

RISE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS

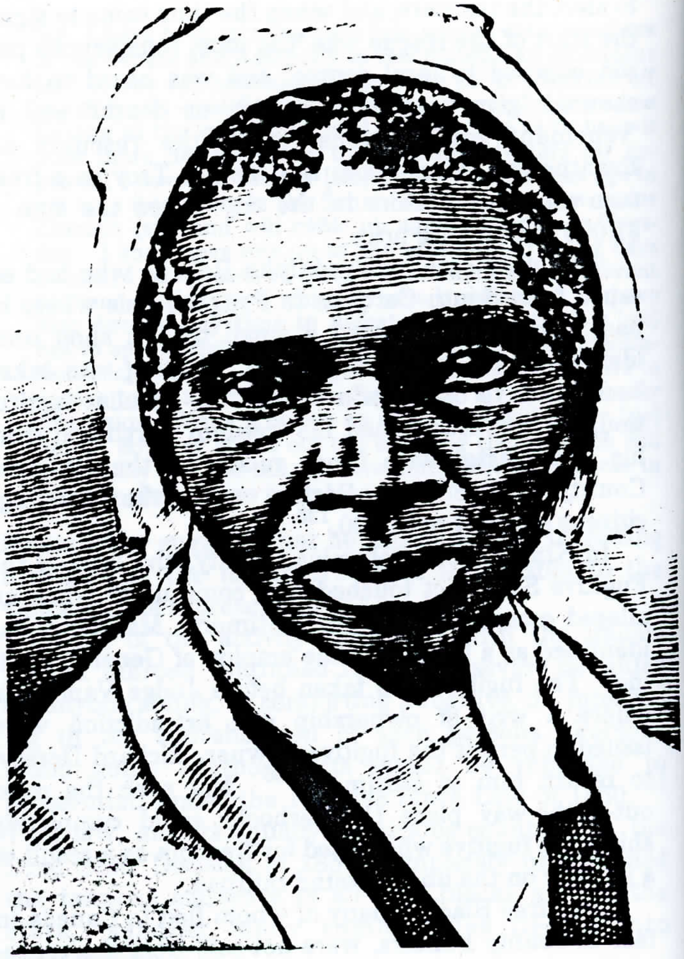
Religious and social organizations were instrumental as spiritual, socioeconomic and political vehicles in the African American communities in the Hudson-Mohawk region during the fight against slavery and racial proscription. The churches and their ministers, as spiritual abodes and religious-political leaders, were in the forefront of the struggle. The founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) by Richard Allen in Philadelphia in 1787 was a move to create a place of worship where Blacks felt welcomed and were at ease with themselves and their God. The rise of separate Black churches was, in part, a response to a highly proscriptive, white dominated society. A 19th century traveler wrote, after visits to white churches, "few people of colour [were] in the churches, and such of them as were there assembled in a corner separate from the rest of the people...."[139]

The AME Church and its counterpart, the AME Zion (founded by James Varick, who was born in 1750 in Newburgh),[140] were not only places of worship but along with the Baptist and Presbyterian churches, were social service agencies and vehicles of political leadership in the African American comunities. Many of the early spokespersons for African American causes were church leaders such as Henry Highland Garnet, Samuel Ringgold Ward, Sojourner Truth, William P. Butler (former pastor of churches in Hudson and Poughkeepsie), and many others. The church was their training ground. It was perhaps the AME Zion Church which best "illustrated the close linkage between religion and abolitionism among Black people," and many of its branches served, along with other Black denominations, as stations on the underground railroad.[141]

Branches of most denominations were established throughout the region, with their ministers administering to the spiritual, sociopolitical and economic needs of their congregations. AME Zion and AME churches were established in such places as Sparkill



Reverend James Varick



Sojourner Truth

(the "Old Swamp" church; St. Charles AME Zion under the Reverend William Thompson in 1865); at Newburgh (AME Zion, n.d.); in Poughkeepsie (Catherine Street" AME Zion, 1840); at Kingston (by 1860, three AME churches); at Albany (the Hamilton-Israel AME, 1828); in Kinderhook, Columbia County (the Bethel AME, 1851 and pastored initially by Peter Burgett); and at Saratoga (the Dyer-Phelps AME Zion, 1863).[142]

Black fraternal and sororal organizations, along with the churches, were centers of Black social life, sponsoring many literary and cultural events. Cities in the Hudson-Mohawk region had their Masonic and Odd Fellows Lodges which "generally provided members with financial insurance during difficult times" as well as providing "opportunities for Black male fellowship...and in extending charity to the indigent."[143]

One fraternal organization, the Charles Sumner Benevolent Association, organized in Albany in 1875, had as its motto, "We care for our sick and bury our dead."[144] Another in that city, of which little is known, was the Burdett-Coutts Benevolent Association. One of its most prominent presidents was Adam Blake, the owner of the Kenmore Hotel on North Pearl Street in the late nineteenth century, and who on his death in 1881 had amassed an estate estimated between $100,000 and $500,000.[145]

Sororal organizations duplicated some services of the fraternal groups. Two of these sororals, the Albany Female Lundy Society founded on June 19, 1833, and the Nyack United Sisters in Friendship, founded in 1874, had mottos similar to that of the Sumner Benevolent Association. In the United Sisters of Friendship, dues for members were 25 cents monthly. When a member was disabled through sickness, that person received benefits of $2.00 per week. At the time of death of a member the benefits totaled $30, while those for a child who died was $5.00.[146]

The Lundy Society had similar benefits and responsibilities, and was composed of women who "thought of themselves as very elite..." but who nevertheless were conscious of their charge to be a society of "earnest and benevolent colored ladies for mutual benefit and the development of social, intellectual and religious principles."[147] Prospective members were screened, and scrutiny of them continued during their active membership. When and if behavior unbecoming of a member was revealed, the rules of the society were enforced. Those rules read, in part, that "if any member commits a scandalous sin or walks on truth, and after having been reproved continues manifestly impertinent, she shall be excluded from office until she gives satisfactory evidence of repentance."[148]

African American religious and social organizations were important and functional agencies in the 19th century Hudson-Mohawk region. In addition to the spiritual, economic and political functions, those organizations promoted group cohesion, and established values and set the appropriate behavioral patterns that Blacks should assume in a predominantly white society.

CONFLICT WITH WHITE IMMIGRANTS

In addition to having to contend with the many forms of racial proscription, African Americans had to contend with socioeconomic problems that resulted from a massive influx of European immigrants. Arriving in America in successive waves, such as the Irish in the 1820s, 1840s, and 1850s, these white immigrants competed with Blacks for employment. Initially shunned by white society because of their accents, language and customs, many of the Irish and German families, after one or two generations found the avenues of social and economic mobility more open to them than to the African-Americans who had been in the country for generations.

The ante-bellum period was also a time in which mob violence and racial attacks against Blacks was widespread throughout the Hudson-Mohawk region.[149] It was a time in which racism became a tool to keep the working classes opposed to one another, even though their socioeconomic needs were similar. The consequence was a constant imbroglio in which white mob violence was directed indiscriminantly against communities of Blacks. White mob violence was also a major obstacle to Black access to opportunities in the work place. According to Edgar McManus, much of the lower class white resentment was, perhaps, part of the legacy of slavery. McManus wrote that "as the working class grew and the wage rate fell, *negrophobia* became the anodyne of lower-class frustration. Free Negroes were brutalized by ruffians and excluded from skilled employment by the hostility of white workers. Indeed, free Negroes in the nineteenth century remained as much a class apart as in the days of slavery..."[150]

White immigrants were aided in their lawlessness by a society that was determined to slow Black socioeconomic mobility through a limited franchise; segregated education, job discrimination, and social ostracism. This was clearly evident with the successive constitutional convention during and after the ante-bellum period, and the racist pontifications spouted by political leaders from the Hudson-Mohawk region. For example, representatives from the region to the 1821 constitutional convention held in Albany went on record as to their position on the *Negro suffrage question*. Colonel Samuel Young of Saratoga County was an open and bitter opponent of Black suffrage. It was his position that the constitution should conform to a society that had no social intercourse with Blacks, and therefore Blacks should not be given the vote.[151]

Justice Ambrose Spencer, who represented Albany County, went on record by stating "that just as minors were excluded from the polls because they were not considered sufficiently intelligent, so it was just that Negroes, who lacked intelligence should be excluded."[152] P.A. Livingston of Dutchess County asked, "What has been their [Blacks] conduct that should entitle them to your hospitalities and associations? What privilege have you conferred...that they have not abused?"[153] Two newspapers in the city of Poughkeepsie, by siding with the positions of pro-slavers over abolition lent support to the use of mob violence in breaking up anti-slavery rallies, thus adding to the flame of racism in the region.[154]

The remarks of an English visitor's driver on a trip from Boston to Albany, perhaps sums up the general feeling of many whites towards African Americans. When asked a question about the Irish in America, the driver remarked. that "they [Irish] are an ugly set of people...but there are no people I hate so much as the niggers - I always drive over'em, when they get in my way." And when he was asked why he hated Blacks, responded: "I suppose they are much the same as other people....So they are, to be sure: - I don't know why I hate'em: - but I do hate'em."[155] Perhaps most whites across the region didn't know either.

The arrival of German, French Canadians and some early Irish immigrants into the region dates back to the pre-Revolutionary period.[156] At that time, their numbers were not significant enough to pose a serious threat in a labor market where certain skill, semi-skilled and manual labor positions were traditionally held by Blacks. But in the era of industrialization - growth of textile mills, breweries (two sectors of the economy in which Blacks were virtually excluded), the growth and expansion of canals and rail networks in the region between the 1820s and just prior to the Civil War - the labor market changed dramatically. Jobs traditionally held by Blacks were assumed by white immigrants and, after only one or two generations, their descendants. This was sustained "intergenerational mobility." However, "the vast number of black people [in the Hudson region]...in the late nineteenth century did not experience intergenerational mobility."[157]

An ante-bellum immigrant group that constantly clashed with Blacks over jobs was the Irish. In the 1820s, and as part of the exodus from Ireland because of the famine, many Irish workers were recruited and brought to the region to dig the systems of canals. In the 1840s and 1850s, they also worked on the construction of railroads.[158] To entice the Irish into the region, Erastus Corning's New York Central rail company even arranged for the transportation and arrival of Irish immigrants into Albany, an economic boomtown during the period, 1830-1855.[159] The economic boom involved the rails and canal systems as well as the stockyards adjacent to Corning's New York Central rail shop in West Albany, and "the tremendous lumber market along the canal basin, and the iron stone foundries downtown."[160] It was an economic boom from which the Irish would benefit, but there would be no benefits for African Americans.

The Irish were one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in cities along the Hudson and Mohawk rivers. In Albany City, as an example, the Irish population jumped from between 1,000 and 2,000 in 1830 (out of a population of 24,211) to as many as 5,100 or more in 1850.[161] Blacks, on the other hand, had decreased from a combined (slave and free) total of 4,099 or 5.4 percent of the county's population in 1790, to only 1,194 in 1850, 1.3 percent.[162] By 1830 the Irish had exceeded this percentage in the city of Albany alone, leveling at 5 to 10 percent of the total population.[163]

Prior to the influx of immigrants, jobs such as coachmen, barbers, white-washers, as well as female positions of washer women and other generally defined domestic chores, were traditionally performed by Blacks. In the decade before the Civil War, whites began to move into the so-called "Negro" jobs. By the Reconstruction period, there had been a wholesale displacement of Blacks.

In Poughkeepsie, in 1850, Blacks were 43 percent of all coachmen/drivers, while the Irish were only 14 percent and the Germans 3 percent. In 1880, Blacks had dropped to 18 percent while the Irish and Germans had increased to 31 and 19 percent, respectively.[164] In the barbering business during the same time period, Blacks dropped from 27 percent to 13 percent, while Germans rose from 18 percent in 1850 to 50 percent in 1880.[165] In the occupation of teamster/carter/carman, whites completely dominated by 1880 with 59 percent to 5 percent for Blacks.[166]

Black women, who had "fewer occupational choices," even in the pre-Civil era, sought work in a very restricted market in the Reconstruction era. Because their husbands were limited to "the most menial and low paying of jobs," Black women had to work to make ends meet. During that era, 90 percent of the Black women in Poughkeepsie worked as domestics.[167] At one point, during a heavy unemployment period in 1855, Black women in Albany were challenged by the Irish as washer women.[168]

Further north in Troy and Cohoes, New York, above Albany, the same employment pattern existed. In the Troy iron foundries the Irish dominated in the unskilled and skilled categories, holding "73.6% of the service jobs [and constituting] 54.7% of the molders, 40% of the peddlers, and 55.4% of the heaters and rollers," respectively, between 1855 and 1884.[169] During the censuses of 1860 and 1880, only one Black was listed as "employed in the iron foundries."[170] They were systematically excluded from the industry, and either filled service positions (coachmen and maids) while "gathered in shanty enclaves in alley dwellings in the city center near the river," or they left Troy.[171] Similarly, in the Harmony textile mills of Cohoes, the French Canadians and, later, the Irish, after the Civil War, were the predominant workers, with very few, if any, Blacks.[172] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, similar employment patterns persisted, but Blacks competed with immigrant Slavs and Italians for jobs in the many brickyards along the Hudson River as well as jobs on river boats. As with the Irish, much of the animosity surrounding the competition was expressed in mob violence against Blacks.[173]

The Albany, Poughkeepsie, Troy and Cohoes employment conditions paint a picture of white inclusion and Black exclusion that was common throughout the region. African Americans, who had been in the region many generations before the immigrant explosion, were systematically prevented from achieving sustained intergenerational socioeconomic mobility. White immigrants, in less than a generation (and at times less than a decade as with the Irish in the iron foundries in Troy), were able to achieve entry into most employment categories without much difficulty.[174] It was as if "the newcomers from Europe had to be provided for, even if it was to be at the expense of the indigenous colored American."[175] Granted what had been described as "preferential treatment in employment," the white immigrants gradually sustained intergenerational mobility, while Blacks slipped downward.[176] For example, John Williams of Poughkeepsie rose from the generic classification of laborer in 1850 to a boatman in 1855-56, and finally to the pilot of the steamship *Sherman* in 1860. After the Civil War, the city directory once again listed Williams as a laborer--displaced by white immigrants.[177]

The competition for jobs, the growing indifference to the plight of Blacks by a society blinded by its own racism, inevitably led to white mob violence against Blacks. Blacks were constantly attacked by white mobs who felt threatened by Black competition, and who were confident that their actions against Blacks would go uninvestigated and unprosecuted by the white justice system. With such indifference in Albany, whites were able to completely destroy an integrated residence on Lodge Street because of what they described as a "noisey place," and without any retribution from the mayor and aldermen who stood by and watched.[178] The attack was really prompted by the fact that Blacks lived at the establishment with whites, and because, for most working class whites, the apparent growing segregation patterns, starting as early as the 1820s, were not setting in fast enough.[179]

In addition to mob violence, Blacks across the Hudson-Mohawk region suffered from ill-health (with higher mortality rates than whites)[180] and "were poorly housed in small buildings or tenements badly built and maintained, that were much more likely than residences of whites...to be located in alleys and closed courts, or crammed onto the rear portion of narrow lots."[181]

THE CIVIL WAR

The Civil War period in the Hudson-Mohawk region was trying for Blacks. Mob violence against them was further stimulated by the perception of working class whites that the war was being fought to free the slaves and thus create more competition for them in the labor market. The draft riots in New York City of July, 1863, in which Blacks were brutally murdered and hanged from trees and lampposts, reached into the upper regions of the Hudson-Mohawk region. As in New York City, where it was reported that some whites did not hesitate to "shoot a blackman with as little regard to moral consequences as they would shoot a dog,"[182] in Poughkeepsie in that year the Catherine Street A.M.E. Zion Church was attacked by drunken white soldiers. The attack caused severe damage to the religious edifice. In a later incident in 1863, Black male parishioners stood guard at the church during a mob disturbance around the city to prevent it from being burned down. The white mob was in such a frenzy that the Governor had to ask assistance from the Vermont Volunteers to restore order.[183]

South of Poughkeepsie at Newburgh, white mobs twice (December 31, 1860; and December 31, 1862) attacked the congregation of the A.M.E. Zion while it was in service. Identified as "unruly soggers," the mobs bloodied parishioners and destroyed church property until they were "beaten out of the church." Military units eventually had to be called in to disperse and apprehend whites associated with the mob.[184]

Similar violence further south in Tarrytown, Westchester County forced many Blacks to abandon their homes and leave the town in search of refuge in places like Buttermilk Hill until federal gunboats appeared on the Hudson to restore order.[185] At Troy Blacks were subjected to similar riotous conditions. Starting at "the Rensselaer Iron foundries and the Albany Nail Works," the rioting spilled over into the community where threats were made against Black property owners. A boat docked at the wharfs had to weigh anchor because of "threats made against colored workers on board."[186]

Although white men expressed their resentment and anger at the draft and war through violence perpetrated against Blacks, it did not deter Black men from their desire to serve in the war. Some, undoubtedly, joined New York's three regiments of "United States Colored Troops," the 20th, 26th, and 31st.[187] But because of the pervasive racist attitudes in New York State, many Blacks from the Hudson-Mohawk area, wishing to serve, also enlisted in predominantly Black regiments outside the state, such as the famous 54th Massachusetts Infantry. Among the ranks of the 54th Massachusetts were men such as James R. Jones--a barber from Albany, Joseph Brown--a hostler from Cazenovia, and Jacob Williams--a farmer from White Plains. The men of the 54th earned distinction for the unit in the years 1863-1865.[188] Some time after the war, the A.M.E. Zion Church in Newburgh erected a plaque on its facade to commemorate its brave sons who served in the Civil War.[189]

Cemeteries along the Hudson-Mohawk rivers and in the Champlain Valley contain the remains of many of those who served. For example, an unforgotten colored graveyard atop Cedar Hill north of Fishkill Village holds the remains of two Blacks: John W.H. Atkins of Company B, 20th Regiment of the U.S. Colored Volunteers, and William Henry Jefferson of the 8th Regiment of the Pennsylvania Colored Volunteers who died on July 14, 1864 at Yellow Bluff, Virginia.[190] The remains of two Black brothers who served with the 31st New York Colored Regiment in Company I--Charles and George King, are buried in Beekman Precinct, Dutchess County.[191] The remains of the Freeman brothers--Agustus, John, and Perry, are buried in Union Vale, Dutchess County. The Freemans all served in the New York 20th Regiment of Colored Volunteers.[192]

Letters from Simeon A. Tierce to his wife, Sarah Jane, of "The Hill" community near Harrison in Westchester also give evidence of Black men who served in the war. Having risen to the position of sergeant and while stationed at New Orleans, Tierce wrote his wife several times before his death from fever in 1864. Excerpts from the letters read:

> [Feb. 15, 1864]...God has answered prayer...moved the old slave holders out and colored people...keeping stores themselves...and capable of doing it....The time won't be long I hope before we can see [one] another once more on our own soil. All the colored people down here welcome us here with glad hands....[Feb. 22, 1864]...Tell Sissy that her poppy has got the fever and ague....I shed a great many tears when I was taken, thinking about you....We caught four rebels just here about....[March 1, 1864]....I sit evenings alone and think of home all the time....[July 8, 1864]....Give my love to Father and Mother Weeks, Father and Mother Tierce and all the rest...[Simeon was aware of the seriousness of his sickness, he wrote in the same letter]....There is more or less a death...every day...the doctor says it is not a cold but inflamation of the lungs and that I waited too long before I went to him. I want you to have that place fixed so that if me or you should die, it will allways be a good home for Sis as long as she lives. The reason I say so I don't know how soon it may be my turn for some are taken in the morning and die before night. [Tierce died shortly after writing this final letter to his wife Sarah Jane].[193]

Simeon Tierce was just one of the more than 186,000 African Americans who fought in the Civil War. More than 38,000 of them lost their lives in the conflict. African Americans contributed greatly to the Union effort in America's second great war for freedom. For most Blacks, the Civil War represented a major step in the direction of a more open and equitable society, and one where its American citizens, regardless of color, were guaranteed those "unalienable rights."

RECONSTRUCTION TO 20th CENTURY

Following the Civil War, the adoption of the Reconstruction Amendments to the United States Constitution offered a ray of hope to African Americans. By the 1870s, African Americans from the Hudson-Mohawk region were convinced that the Republican Party represented their best hope for achieving equality. The Albany resident, Stephen Myers expressed this position when he stated that "If we should vote against the Republican ticket, we [would be committing suicide], so far as the right of franchise is concerned."[194] The adoption of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the United States Constitution, which freed the slaves, gave them citizenship and the right to vote, gave validity to Stephen Myers' assertion. The Republican Party's control of the federal government during those years were reminders to African Americans that their ultimate salvation appeared to lay with the Republicans.

The slowness of the white electorate to change its views in favor of a bias-free franchise, and the existence of a race-conscious white establishment which was indifferent to the welfare of black New Yorkers, combined with other formidable obstacles to thwart the hopes of African Americans for full equality.

In addition to political rights, African-Americans in the Hudson-Mohawk region were also concerned with civil rights, i.e. jobs, housing, health, and public accommodations. In this vain, it was the efforts of an African American lobbyist, William H. Johnson, a resident of Albany, that was instrumental in getting the New York Legislature to pass the state's first Civil Rights Bill (sometimes referred to as "Janitor Johnson's Law") in 1873. Johnson was aided in his efforts by Charles Lewis, also of Albany. He also was encouraged by the moral support of the Albany Female Lundy Society.[195] Unfortunately, the bill was what one writer has referred to as New York's "States Rights objections to Congressional Reconstruction," and was so devoid of teeth that even Democrats voted for it.[196] Although it was better than no bill, it must be said that the strong civil rights laws that African Americans needed in New York were sacrificed in order to save state sovereignty.[197]

Education was another pressing concern of African Americans in New York in the late 19th and early 20th century. William Johnson, along with the Albany "merchant tailor," William H. Topp, whose "store on Broadway, will not suffer by comparison with the best in any of the Atlantic cities," were instrumental in setting in motion new prospects for education reform in the state. The two got the state government to reexamine the need to abolish laws preventing blacks from free and equal access to the state's public school system. Johnson and Topp had a personal interest in the school systems of Albany, Schenectady and Troy.[198]

In Poughkeepsie in 1873, Joseph Rhodes, proprietor of Eagle Dyeing Establishment, and his wife openly defied segregated school laws "by presenting a test case to the Board of Education of the federal civil rights law" which itself made no distinction of color in guaranteeing those rights to education.[199] The Rhode's strategy was to enroll their two daughters (Josephine 15 and Marietta 9) in the Fourth Grade Primary School rather than send the young ladies to the Colored School No. 1, established in 1844, which was then situated in the AME Zion Church building on Catherine Street.[200] After some deliberation on the part of the Poughkeepsie School Board, and with more black children attending classes at the predominantly white Fifth Ward School, the Board relented and unofficially decreed an open-school system in the city.[201] But in 1874 the New York State Legislature, with lobbyist pressure from William H. Johnson, passed legislation abolishing segregated educational facilities. Some of the immediate results of that legislation was that in 1879 Joseph Rhodes was the first black graduate from the Poughkeepsie High School, with

Gaius Bolin, Sr., the second black graduate in 1883. Gaius later went on to Williams College where he was its first black college graduate in 1889.[202]

Higher education, though, was a slow and difficult road for blacks around the state. Historian Carleton Mabee reported that in the 1870s there were only 59 blacks attending colleges in New York State, and in the 1880s that number dropped to 55, not to rise significantly until 1910 when there were 245 in attendance.[203] In Poughkeepsie, both Vassar College and Eastman Business College refused to admit blacks. The president of Eastman was concerned about what the school's southern students would think, while Vassar's position, even into the twentieth century, was that "the conditions of life here are such [that we] strongly advise Negroes not to enter."[204] At West Point blacks were not admitted until 1870. The first black cadet, J.W. Smith from South Carolina, was so harassed because of his African ancestry that he eventually left the academy. As a result, Frederick Douglass was able to remark in his newspaper that "the spirit of the Ku Klux Klan had reached West Point."[205] With Smith's departure, the honor of being the first black graduate of West Point would go to Henry Ossian Flipper, who wrote of his experiences at the school in his *Colored Cadet at West Point* (1889).

Henry Ossian Flipper

Despite the desire of most blacks for integrated education facilities, a group of black leaders from the Mid-Hudson region, preferring to avoid the harassment, rejection and discrimination of attending a white school, decided to call for the establishment of a predominantly black college. Their choice of a name for the institution was Toussaint L'Overture, after the Haitian revolutionary. Against the wishes of many black leaders, especially the firey AME Zion minister, the Reverend William P. Butler, formerly of churches in Poughkeepsie and Hudson, the advocates of the black college continued to push for the establishment of the institution. On paper the advocates listed the need for 15 acres for the institution, a working capital of $300,000, and boasted one of the first all-black board of trustees.[206] The trustees were from various mid-Hudson counties.

Although a modified version of the bill proposing the college was pushed through the State Legislature, the proposed Toussaint College idea ran into stiff opposition from the African American community. The New York Annual Conference of the AME Zion Church, meeting in Poughkeepsie in 1871, refused to endorse the college. A year later, in 1872, the state convention of the New York Colored Citizens Convention, meeting in Troy, took a stand against separate black educational facilities. In the words of Professor Mabee, "the convention, eager to capitalize on the gains it believed that blacks were making during Reconstruction, was urging that blacks, instead of creating more black institutions, should work to open more white institutions to blacks."[207] Without the backing of these two powerful black organizations the college was doomed. In addition, the growing trend in the 1870s and 1880s was to push for more blacks to be admitted to New York State colleges.[208]

Conclusion

During the last two decades of the 19th century, the Hudson-Mohawk region experienced an increase in its African American population as a result of the immigration of southern blacks fleeing from low wages and other forms of economic exploitation in the South, and the general pervasive atmosphere of southern violence against blacks.[209] Along with their northern brethren, these newly arrived southern blacks sought a better life in the more industrialized North. But instead they found themselves socially ostracized, passed over in their quest for industrial jobs, and economically depressed. At best, the majority of blacks in the region could find only unskilled and menial seasonal work, leaving them in a state of financial insecurity and easy prey to the whims of white racist attitudes. With respect to generational socioeconomic mobility, Clyde Griffen's remarks about such mobility in Poughkeepsie for blacks is appropriate for the entire region.

He wrote: "For black Americans, unlike the children of the immigrants, moving out into more prosperous native white neighbors would not be an option by the turn of the century."[210]

Finally, as a way of concluding this cursory examination of the African American presence in the history of the Hudson-Mohawk region, historian Rayford Logan's depiction of the late 19th and early 20th century seems appropriate for the region. In his *Betrayal of the Negro,* Logan noted that, for African Americans, "the period 1877-1901 was the nadir in [their] quest for equal rights."[211] Down, yes..out, no! Further tests of the resilience and fortitude of the efforts of African-Americans in the Hudson-Mohawk region and around the state, to make the American dream a black reality were yet to come in the twentieth century.

1.

Leon Higgenbotham,Jr., *In the Matter of Color, Race and the American Legal Process: The Colonial Period* Oxford University Press: New York, (1980), 100-150.

2. *Ibid.*, 103.

3. George W. Williams, *History of the Negro Race in America, 1619-1880* (1883 rpt., New York, Arno Press, 1968), vol. I, 136. Quoted in Higgenbotham, *Matter of Color,* 104.

4. Higgenbotham, op. cit., 103.

5. Edmond O'Callaghan, *The Colonial Laws of New York From Year 1664 to the Revolution* (Albany: James B. Lydon, State Printer, 1894), vol. I, 764. See Carl Nordstrom, "The New York Slave Code," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* (January 1980), 7-26.

6. Cf. A.J. Williams-Myers, "Hands That Picked No Cotton: An Exploratory Examination of African Slave Labor in the Colonial Economy of the Hudson River Valley to 1800," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* (July 1987).

7. Doris Begor Morton, *Philip Skene of Skenesborough* (Granville, New York: The Grastorf Press, 1959), 23, 32.

8. Jacob Judd, "Frederick Philipse and the Madagascar Trade," *The New York Historical Quarterly,* LV, 4 (October 1971), 354-374. Cf. Elizabeth Donnan, ed., *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave trade to America* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institute, 1932), 4 vol..

9. James G. Lyndon, "New York and the Slave Trade, 1700 to 1774," *William and Mary Quarterly,* 3rd Series, XXXV, 2 (April 1778), 357-394.

10. "Account of Negroes Imported into New York from 1700 to 1774 . . ., in *Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York,* Hugh Hastings Supervisor of publication (James B. Lyon, State Printer: Albany, 1901), vol. IV, 2336.

11. George W. Williams, op. cit., vol. II, 436; Helen Tunnicliff Caterall and James J. Hayden, eds., *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro* (Octagon Books, Inc.: New York, 1968), 351.

12. Evarts B. Greene and Virginia D. Harrington, *American Population Before the Federal Census of 1790*, 1932 Rpt., (Peter Smith: Glouster, Mass., 1966), 105, 111.

13. Cf. A. J. Williams-Myers, "The African Presence in the Mid-Hudson Valley Before 1800: A Preliminary Historiographical Sketch," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* (January 1983), 33.

14. Cf. Williams-Myers, "Hands That Picked No Cotton . . .:" Higgenbotham, op. cit., 100-101.

15. Louis Seymour Zimm, et. al., *Southeastern New York* (Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc.: New York, 1946), vol. I, 36-37.

16. Cf. Williams-Myers, "Hands That Picked No Cotton. . . "

17. Anne MacVicar Grant, *Memoirs of an American Lady: With Sketches of Manners and Scenery in*

America as They Existed Previous to the Revolution (London, 1808), II, 314. Cf. Bogard Tuckerman, *Life of General Philip Schuyler, 1733-1804* (Dodd, Mead and Company: New York, 1903), 72-73; Duke La Rochefoncault-Liancourt, *Travels Through the United States of North America, the Country of the Iroquois, and Upper Canada in the Years, 1795,1796, and 1797* (R. Philips: London, 1799), I, 376; "A Well Cultivated Domain, A Documentary Study of Farming on the Schuyler Estates," Schuyler Mansion Publication, Albany, New York, 1986.

18. Cf. William F. Fox, *History of the Lumber Industry in the State of New York* (Harbor Hill Books: Harrison, New York, 1976), 24-25.

19. D.B. Morton, op. cit., 29.

20. "Philip Livingston to Robert Livingston, Livingston Manor, January 30, 1744/5." *General Correspondence, Papers of the Livingston Family 1630-1900* (Osborn-Redmond Collection), Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (FDR Lib.), Hyde Park, N.Y., reel 6. Cf. Roberta Singer, "Slave-holding on Livingston Manor and Claremont, 1686-1800," *Yearbook Dutchess County Historical Society,* 69 (1984), 46-69.

21. "Philip Livingston to Robert Livingston, January 30, 1744-45," *Papers of the Livingston Family,* FDR Library.

22. "Philip Livingston to Robert Livingston, May 15, 1745," *Papers of the Livingston Family,* FDR Library.

23. Cf. Williams-Myers, "Hands That Picked No Cotton . . ." 103-104; Caterall and Hayden, op. cit., 380.

24. Judd, op. cit., 364.

25. Carl Carmer, *The Hudson* (Farrar & Rinehart: New York, Toronto, 1939), 32; Joel Munsel, *The Annals of Albany* (Albany: J. Munsel, 58 State Street, 1850), vol. I, 261.

26. Frederic Shonnard and W.W. Spooner, *History of Westchester County* . . . Rpt, (Harbor Hill Books: Harrison, New York, 1974), 153.

27. Mary Humphreys, *Women of Colonial and Revolutionary Times: Catherine Schuyler* (Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1897), 83-84.

28. *Ibid.*, 38.

29. J.E. Strickland, ed., *Journal of a Tour of the United States of America, 1794-1795,* by William Strickland (The New York Historical Society: New York, 1971), 163-164.

30. *Poughkeepsie Journal,* May 8, 1804, 2/3. Cited in A.J. Williams-Myers, *A Portrait of Eve: Towards a Social History of Black Women in the Hudson River Valley* (New Paltz, 1987), 3-6.

31. See A.J. Williams-Myers, "The African Presence in the Hudson River Valley: The Defining of Relationships Between the Masters and the Slaves," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History,* 12, 1 (January 1988), 81-98.

32. Cf. "An Act to Enable Certain Persons to Take and Hold Estates Within this State, and for other Purposes," passed February 17, 1809. Cited in, *Laws of the United States, the State of New York, and New Jersey, Relative to Slaves and the Slave Trade* (New York: Printed by Collens & Co., No. 189 Pearl Street, 1811), 22-23.

33. "Will of Gritie Hendrix, widow of deceased Dirck Hendrikse of Fox Hall, dated September 26, 1708," in Gustave Anjou, *Ulster County N.Y. Probate Records from 1665* American Record Series A (New York, 1906), I, 75-76.

34. *Ibid.*, "Will of William West of Kingston, dated May 28, 1738," vol. II, 124.

35. D.B. Morton, op. cit., 53.

36. Grant, op. cit., I, 53.

37. Cf. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Ante-Bellum South* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1979) revised edition, 3-48.

38. *Ibid.*, 20.

39. Cf. A.J. Williams-Myers, "Pinkster Carnival: Africanisms in the Hudson River Valley," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* (January 1985), 7-18.

40. *Ibid.*, 16.

41. E.B. O'callaghan, ed., *Colonial Laws of New York* (Albany, 1896), II, 763.

42. Aaron Hamlet Payne, "The Negro in New York Prior to 1860," *The Howard Review*, 1, (June 1923), 12-13.

43. "Kingston Court Records, November 27, 1702." Cited in *The (Kingston) Argus*, 3, 1903, clipping on deposit, Senate House Museum, Kingston, New York, Cf. A.J. Williams-Myers, "African Presence...Defining...," 83-85.

44. Thomas J. Davis, *A Rumor of Revolt: "The Great Negro Plot" in Colonial New York* (Macmillian, Co.: New York, 1985), 6.

45. Din R. Gerlach, "Black Arson in Albany, New York, November, 1793," *Journal of Black Studies*, 7, 3 (March 1877), 304.

46. "Negro Plot in Ulster County, 1795," *Livingston's New York Gazette*, 2 March 1775; *Weekly Mercury*, 6 March 1775, on deposit, Senate House Museum, Kingston, New York. Cf. Ivor Noel Hume, 1775: *Another Part of the Field* (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1966), 109-110.

47. Al Green, "Abstracts from History Written by Mabel Hall of Hurley, Herself a Descendent of Slaves," *The Times Herald Record*, March 14, 1871, on deposit, Huguenot Historical Society Library, New Paltz, N.Y.

48. *Ibid.*

49. "Manor of Livingston, Robert Livingston, Justice of the Peace, February 2, 1715," *Livingston Family Papers*, reel 3, FDR Library.

50. "To Jean Baptist Van Rensselaer, August 20, 1659," in *Correspondence of Jeremais Van Rensselaer, 1651-1674* (Albany: State University of New York, 1932), 167.

51. *Poughkeepsie Journal*, April 28, 1813, 3/4.

52. *Ibid.*, January 24, 1803, 3/4.

53. *Ibid.*, August 4, 1789, 3/4. This section was constructed with the use of materials written by this author and published in *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, and cited in the above notes: January 1984, January 1985, July 1987, and January 1988. The author wishes to express his thanks to the journal's editor for permission to use the material.

54. Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1961), vii. This section on the American Revolution is an excerpt from a larger work in progress.

55. *Ibid.*, vii.

56. Lisa A. Bull, "The Negro," in Frederick F. Harling and Martin Kaufman, eds. *Ethnic Groups in the American Revolution* (Westfield Bicentennial Committee & Historical Journal of Western Massachusetts, Westfield, Mass., 1976), 69, Cf. Quarles, op. cit.

57. Cited in Roi Ottley and William J. Weatherby, eds., *The Negro in New York; An Informal Social History* (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1967), 121.

58. Muster Rolls of New York Provincial Troops; 1755-1764," *Collections of the New York Historical Society for the Year 1891* (New York, 1892), 476.

59. *Ibid.*, 446.

60. *Ibid.*, 316.

61. "Men Enlisted Out of Colonel Abraham Hering's Regiment in Orange County, Mustered the 24th Day of April 1759, and Appendix D," *Orange County Historical Society*, No. 3 (1973-1974), 34-35; "A Muster Roll of the Men Raised and Pass'd in the County of Orange for Captain Howell's Company, May 19th, 1760," *Collections of the New York Historical Society for the Year 1891*, 332.

62. Walter H. Mazyck, *George Washington and the Negro* (The Associated Publishers, Inc.: Washington, D.C., 1932), 38; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 10-13. Cf. David F. Phillips, "Negroes in the American Revolution," *The Journal of Negro History* 5 (1911), 143-146; "The Size Roll of the Absentees Belonging to the First New Hampshire Regiment Commanded by Colonel Joseph Cillery - Valley Forge January ye 10th 1778, Continental Regiments, 1778," *New Hampshire Provincial and State Papers (1886)*, 434-439; David White, *Connecticut's Black Soldiers 1775-1783* (The Pequot Press: Chester, Conn., 1973); "A Time of Slavery," in Morris J. MacGregor and Bernard C. Nalty, ed., *Blacks in the United States Armed Forces; Basic Documents*, (Scholarly Resources, Inc.: Wilmington, Delaware, 1977; Robert Ewell Publishing Company, Inc.: Chicago, 1974); Robert Ewell Greene, *Black Courage; 1775-1783: Documentation of Black Participation in the American Revolution* (National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution: Washington, 1984); William C. Nell, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolu-*

tion (Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968), Chapter VI for New York.

63. Cf. *The Records of Connecticut Men in the Military and Naval Service During the War of the Revolution; 1775-1783*, Henry Johnson, ed., (Hartford, Conn., 1889), 29-30; James Roberts, *New York in the Revolution as Colony and State* (Press of Bandow Printing Company; Albany, N.Y., 1898) 2nd edition, 8; *Heath's Memoirs of the American War*, Rpt. (Books for Libraries Press: Freeport, N.Y., 1970), 40, 405-406.

64. R.E. Greene, op. cit., 9, 31, 42, 48; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 11; D. White, op. cit., 17.

65. *Record of Connecticut Men*, 39-44, 75, 99.

66. Edwards Park, "Could Canada have ever been our Fourteenth Colony? or Arnold's Dash to Quebec," *Smithsonian* 18, 9 (December, 1987), 41-49; Ruth P. Heidgerd, ed., *Ulster County in the Revolution; A Guide to those who Served* (The Huguenot Historical Society: New Paltz, N.Y., 1977), 4, 20, 57, 99, 204, 251; Alan and Barbara Aimone, "The History of the 2nd New York, 1775-1783," unpublished manuscript, U.S. Military Academy Library, West Point, New York, 1; Robert Cookley and Stetson Conn, *The War of the American Revolution* (Center of Military History, United States Army: Washington, D.C., 1975), 92-94.

67. *Records of Connecticut Men*, 303; *Heath Memoirs*, 95; George F. Scheer, *Private Yankee Doodle Being a Narrative of Some of the Adventures, Dangers and Sufferings of a Revolutionary Soldier, Joseph Plumb Martin* (Little, Brown and Company: Boston, 1962), 164 (note 4).

68. Conte Jean-Francois Louis de Clarmont-Crevecoeur, "Journal of the War in America During the Years 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783," in Howard C. Rice, Jr., and Anne S.K. Brown, eds., *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J and Brown University Press: Providence, Rhode Island, jointly, 1972), vol. I, 34 (note 39), 35; Jared Spards, ed., *Correspondences of the American Revolution; Being Letters of Eminent Men to George Washington from the Time of his Taking Command of the Army to the End of his Presidency* (Little, Brown and Company: Boston, 1853), vol. I, 417; *The Hudson Valley and the American Revolution*, Office of State History, the State Education Department (New York Historic Trust: Albany, N.Y., 1968), 17.

69. *Hudson Valley and the American Revolution*, 6; Scheer, op. cit., 278; "From Governor Clinton, Poughkeepsie, 20 December 1777," in *Correspondences to George Washington*, II, 59. In the winter when military operations were suspended the chain was hauled out of the Hudson by windless for repairs.

70. Lorenzo J. Greene, "Some observations on the Black Regiment of Rhode Island in the American Revolution, *Journal of Negro History*, 37, 2 (April 1952), 144-146; Philip S. Foner, *Blacks in the American Revolution* (Greenwood Press: Westport, Conn., 1975), 57; William C. Nell, *Services of Colored Americans in the Wars of 1776 and 1812* (Boston: Printed by Prentiss & Sawyer, 1851), xerox copy by University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 10; Sidney Kaplan, *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, 1770-1800* (Smithsonian Institute Press: Washington, D.C., 1973), 42, 55-56; George H. Moore, "Historical Notes on the Employment of Negroes in the American Army of the Revolution," (New York, 1862), in *The Negro Soldier; A Select Compilation* (Negro Universities Press: N.Y., 1970), 19; Laura A. Wilkes, "Missing Pages in American History; Revealing the Services of Negroes in the Early Wars in the United States of America, 1641-1815," (Washington, D.C., n.d.), in *The Negro Soldier*, 34-35; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 73,77, 79, 80-82. Cf. *Black Courage*; Sidney S. Rider, "The Black Regiment of the Revolution," *Rhode Island Historical Tracts*, 10 (1880), 1-50.

71. Cf. "Journal of Louis-Alexandre Berthier, Land Campaigns 10 May 1780 - 26 August 1781," in Rice and Brown, op. cit., I, 249.

72. Allison Albee, "The Defenses at Pine Bridge," *The Westchester Historian* (1958-1961), 13 parts. See especially 37, 1 (January, February, March, 1961), part 11, 15-20; Kaplan, op. cit., 56; Wilkes, op. cit., 35; *Heath's Memoirs*, 303; Rider, op. cit., 3-4; Hufeland, op. cit., 379-382; L.J. Greene, op.cit., 169-170; Bolton, op. cit., 678-680, 686.

73. Cf. *Heath's Memoirs*, 267, 268, 269.

74. "A Hudson River History Narrative," Westchester African American Historical Society, *Newsletter* (August 8, 1987) 2-3. As a militia man, Peterson apparently manned the cannon "that blew a hole in the British Ship *Vulture* as it waited [on the Hudson] for the British spy, [Major] John Andre, to return from Haverstraw on the West shore, where he had met with Benedict Arnold to receive the plans to West Point."

75. Herbert Aptheker, *Essays in the History of the American Negro* (International Publishers: New York, 1969), 108-109; Benson J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution* (Charles E. Tuttle Co: Rutland, Vermont, 1972, II, 744 (note 3), 744-746. Cf. Henry Johnston, *The Storming of Stony Point* (James T. White & Co.: New York, 1900). Pompey Lamb does not appear as a significant actor in the capture of the Point, nor is there any mention of other African combatants from among various military units that participated in the capture such as those from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, New York, etc.

76. Aptheker, op. cit., 100; Alan and Barbara Aimone, op. cit., 6; Berthold Fernow, ed., *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (Weed, Parsons and company, Printers: Albany,

NH.Y., 1887), XV (State Archives vol. I); 188. Cf. Howard Peckham, *The Toll of Independence Engagements and Battle Casualties of the American Revolution* (the University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1974).

77. "Death Certificate, Lewis Bradley of Pawling, New York, 13 May 1837," Dutchess County Surrogate Office, Poughkeepsie, New York.

78. MacGregor and Nalty, op. cit., 181; *Black Courage*, 32, 42, 60, 81.

79. Cf. Richard J. Kile, "The Struggle for the Hudson: The British Naval Expedition Under Captain Hyde Parker and Captain James Wallace, July 12-August 18, 1776," in *Narratives of the Revolution in New York* (New York Historical Society, 1975), 36-79; "From Major General Heath, King's Bridge, 18 August 1776," *Correspondence to George Washington*, I, 277. George W. Pratt, "An Account of the British Expedition Above the Highlands of the Hudson River and of the Events Connected with the Burning of Kingston in 1777." Rpt., Ulster County Historical Society *Collections*, Volume I, 1860 (Ulster County Historical Society, 1977), 111, 115. Cf. James A. Roberts, *New York in the Revolution as Colony and State*, 9; *The Chaplain Valley in the American Revolution*. Published jointly by New York Revolution Bicentennial Commission and the Champlain Valley Committee for the Observance of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution (State Education Department: Albany, N.Y., 1976), 12. Cf. *Journals of the Military Expedition of Major General John Sullivan 1779*, Frederick Cook (University Microfilms: Ann Arbor, 1967), especially "Journal of Lt. John L. Hardenbergh, 2nd New York Regiment," 115-136.

80. Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, viii, 19-32, 113-114; Hufeland, op. cit., 296-297. Clinton's proclamation read in part: "...I do most strictly forbid any person to sell or claim right over any Negroe, the property of a rebel, who may take refuge with any part of this army: and I do promise to every Negro who shall desert the rebel standard full security to follow within these lines, any occupation which he shall think proper..." 272.

81. Cf. Bolton, op. cit., II, 528; Hufeland, op. cit., 189; *Heath Memoirs*, 119-121; Lossing, op. cit., II, 625. The Negro Fort was situated on the Post Road to Boston east of King's Bridge and slightly southwest of the Valentine's Hill. It was on the "Point" and undoubtedly was the "trip line" for the British to alert them to an advance push south by the American forces. Given the name, the fort was manned by black troops fighting for the British, and were probably elements from *The Black Company of Pioneers* raised in Philadelphia in 1772, or *The Negro Horse* raised in New York in 1782. See Philip R.N. Katcher, *Encyclopedia of British, Provincial, and German Army Units, 1755-1783* (Stackpole Books: Harrisonburg, Penn., 1973), 83, 92. Pvt. Joseph Plumb Martin in his narrative, *Private Yankee Doodle*,states that it was "garrisoned by a gang of fugitive Negroes, commanded by a black by the name of Cuff - Colonel Cuff...,"205.

82. *Minutes of the Committee and the First Commission for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies in the State of New York, December 11, 1776 - September 23, 1778*, and *Minutes of the Council of Appointment, State of New York, April 2, 1778 - May 3, 1779* (New York Historical Society Collections: New York, 1925), 2 vols: I, 70.

83. *Ibid.*, I, 57-58.

84. *Ibid*, I, 271-272.

85. *Ibid.*, II, 443.

86. Jacquetta M. Haley, "Slavery in the Land of Liberty: The Van Cortlandt Response," in *The Van Cortlandt Family in the New Nation* (Sleepy Hollow Restorations: Tarrytown, New York, 1984), 46-47.

87. *Private Yankee Doodle*, 205. On a patrol one night in 1780, Pvt. Martin encountered a runaway in search of Colonel Cuff's blockhouse who asked, "Is this Colonel Cuffee's blockhouse?" Unfortunately for the runaway it wasn't, and he was eventually returned to his master.

88. Cf. *Freedom Not Far Distant*, 68.

89. *Commission for Detecting Conspiracies*, I, 121. For additional evidence of Blacks among British fighting units see: *Minute Book of Proceedings of a Board of General Officers of the British Army at New York 1781* (The New York Historical Society XLIX (New York, 1916) and *Rivington's New York Newspaper Excerpts from a Loyalist Press, 1773-1783*, compiled by Kenneth Scott (New York Historical Society, 1973).

90. The New York Legislature subsequently freed all slaves who participated in the war, and in 1784 and 1786 freed all slaves of British loyalists. See *Calendar of Historical Manuscripts Relating to the War of the Revolution in the Office of the Secretary of State Albany*, N.Y. 2 vols. (Weed, Parsons and Company, Printers: albany, 1868), I, 650; Harry B. Yoshpe, *the Disposition of Loyalist Estates in the Southern District of the State of New York* (New York, 1939), Cf. "Land Bounty Rights," in *New York in the Revolution as Colony and State*, II, 207-209.

91. "Evacuation with the British," in Quarles, *Negro in thee American Revolution*, 158-181; Kaplan, op. cit., 67.

92. Philip H. Smith, *General History of Dutchess County from 1609 to 1876, Inclusive* (Pawling, New

York, 1881), 470.

93. Cited in "Celebration of the Abolition of Slavery," in *Albany Argus & City Gazette*, July 6, 1827,2/3.

94. Leo H. Hirch, Jr., "New York and the Negro, From 1783 to 1865," *Journal of Negro History*, XVI, 1 (January 1931), 395-396.

95. "Celebration of the Abolition of Slavery." Nathaniel Paul was an avid abolitionist and was pastor of the church for many years, while at the same time being a supporter of the idea to establish a school in the black Canadian colony of Wilberforce. In 1831 he went to England to raise funds for the school. With his English wife, Elizabeth, Paul left Albany for Wilberforce but returned and died in 1839. William Lloyd Garrison described Rev. Nathaniel Paul as "a gentleman with whom the proudest or best man on earth need not blush to associate." See Charles H. Wesley, "The Negroes of New York in the Emancipation Movement," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIV, 1 (January 1839), 79; "Paul Family Printout: Nathaniel, Thomas, Benjamin, Nancy," Albany Hall of Records, Albany, N.Y.

96. "Celebration of the Abolition of Slavery."

97. Strickland, op. cit., 169.

98. Leonard P. Curry, *The Free Black in Urban America, 1800-1850* (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1981), 62, 72.

99. Lawrence H. Mamiya and Lorraine M. Roberts, "Invisible People, Untold Stories: A Historical Overview of the Black Community in Poughkeepsie," *Year Book* Dutchess County Historical Society, 72 (1987), 78.

100. Cf. *The Village of Piermont; A Brief History* (Piermont Bicentennial Committee, 1976), 11; Interview with Leonard Cooke of Nyack, N.Y., 5 June 1988.

101. John H. Geisman, *The Archaeology of Social Disintegration in Skunk Hollow, A Nineteenth Century Rural Black Community* (Academic Press: New York, 1982).

102. Olive M. Clearwater and John J. Hofler, *Hurley in the Days of Slavery* (1986), 22; Cf. David S. Cohen, *The Ramapo Mountain People* (New Brunswick, N.Y.: Rutgers University Press, 1974).

103. Edyth Quinn Caro, "Black Civil War Soldiers from the Hills," *The Westchester Historian*, 63, 1 (Winter 1967), 9-16.

104. Smith, *General History of Dutchess*, 135; "Charles Freeman Land Deeds." Dutchess County Deeds Office, County Office Building, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.; "Charles Freeman Death Certificate, January 1834," Dutchess County Surrogate Office, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

105. Alice Eicholz and James M. Rose, eds., *Free Black Heads of Households in the New York Federal Census, 1790-1830* (Gale Research Company: Detroit, Michigan, 1981).

106. "The Mystery of the Old Mine," *Piermont Newsletter*, VIII 3 (October 1974), 2-3; "Local Black History," by Leonard Cooke, personal collection; Zimm, et. al., op. cit., II, 728; *Free Black Heads of Households*. John Moore's economic success followed a century and a half after that of Captain John De Vries, Vries' son, and Nicholas Claus Mande Emmanuel, original holders of 800 acres (De Vries with 1600) of the Tappan Patent. Cooke, "Local History."

107. Dixon Ryan Fox, "The Negro Vote in Old New York," *Political Science Quarterly* , XXXII, 2 (1917), 253-256; Herman D. Bloch, "The New York Negro's Battle for Political Rights, 1777-1865," *International Review of Social History*, IX (1964), 66-67.

108. Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery; The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1961), 77, 85, 91.

109. Bloch, "Negro's Battle for Political Rights," 76.

110. Howard Holman Bell, ed., *Minutes of the Proceedings of the National Negro Conventions, 1830-1864* (Arno Press and the New York Times: New York, 1969), 1830-1833 Philadelphia (4); Charles H. Wesley, "The Negroes of New York in the Emancipation Movement," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIV, 1 (January 1939), 73.

111. Bell, op. cit., 1834 New York, 1835 Philadelphia.

112. *Ibid.*, 1843 Buffalo; 1847 Troy; 1848 Cleveland; 1853 Rochester; 1855 Philadelphia; and 1864 Syracuse.

113. Quoted in Charles H. Wesley, "The Participation of the Negroes in Anti-Slavery Parties," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIX, 1 (January 1944), 39.

114. Cf. "Rev. Henry Highland Garnet (1815-1882) Troy's First Negro Minister and Abolitionist," in Samuel Rezneck, *Profiles out of the Past of Troy, New York, Since 1789* (Troy, N.Y., 1970), 118-122; W.M. Brewer, "Henry Highland Garnet," *Journal of Negro History*, XIII, 1 (January 1928), 36-52; Joel Schor, *Henry Highland Garnet: A Voice of Black Radicalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Greenwood Press: Westport, Conn., 1977); Litwack, op. cit., 189-190; Wesley, "Negroes in the Emancipation Movement," 73.

115. Benjamin Quarles, "Letters From Negro Leaders to Gerrit Smith," *Journal of Negro History*, XXVII (October 1942), 438-439; Wesley, "Negroes in the Emancipation Movement," 89.

116. Schor, op.cit., 35.

117. *Ibid*, 48.

118. Schor, "Henry Highland Garnet," 68, 96; Wesley, "Negroes in the Anti-Slavery Political Parties," 32-74.

119. Schor, *Henry Highland Garnet*, 54-56; Howard H. Bell, "Expressions of Negro Militancy in the North, 1840-1860," *Journal of Negro History*, LVI, 1 (January 1960), 11-20.

120. Brewer, op. cit., 43. As stated by historian G.W. Williams, "Garnet created the idea which Frederick Douglass tempered and presented to the world in a more palliative and acceptable form." Quoted in Schor, *Henry Highland Garnet*, xii.

121. Carleton Mabee, "Separate Black Education in Dutchess County: Black Elementary Schools and a Proposed Black College, *Year Book* Dutchess County Historical Society, 65 (1980), 61.

122. Samuel Ringgold Ward, *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro: His Anti-Slavery Labors in the United States, Canada, and England* (Arno Press: N.Y., 1969), 31-50.

123. Wesley, "Negroes in anti-Slavery Political Parties," 39. Cf. *Poughkeepsie Anti-Slavery Society (Auxiliary to the American Anti-Slavery Society) 1832*, which listed Ward as one of the founders. FDR Library.

124. Quoted in Wesley, "Negroes in Anti-Slavery Political Parties," 39-40.

125. *Ibid.*, 52; Litwack, op. cit., 144-145; Schor, *Henry Highland Garnet*, 68-69, 99.

126. Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (Russell & Russell: N.Y., 1967), 70, 125-126.

127. *Ibid.*, 126-127. Cf. Schor, *Henry Highland Garnet*, 43. In his "Letters from Negro Leaders to Gerrit Smith," 434 (note 5), Quarles describes Topp as a Garrisonian, and that he was second only to Stephen Myers in the work of the Albany Committee on vigilance. Siebert also lists John H. Hooper as a Black conductor for Rensselaer County, 415.

128. Siebert, op. cit., 127; Hirsch, Jr., op. cit., 406-407.

129. Siebert, op. cit., 127. In the mid-Hudson Valley, which was part of the Albany-Troy route and further north, an underground station was opened at the Orthodox Quakers Nine Partners Boarding School, in South Millbrook, in the 1830s. See Susan J. Crane, "Ante-Bellum Dutchess County Historical Society, 65 (1980), 37-38. The home of David Irish on Quaker Hill in Dutchess County participated in the underground railroad, receiving "slaves coming from Jacob Wilett's station in South Millbrook," Crane, 38.

130. Quarles, "Letters from Negro Leaders," 447 (note 45).

131. *Ibid.*, 447-448.

132. Cf. Litwack, op. cit., 237, 249.

133. Schor, *Henry Highland Garnet*, 151; Litwack, 49-50.

134. Cf. "A 'Jerry Rescue' in Troy," *Troy Daily Times*, April 28, 1860, 3-8; "Fugitive Slave Case at Troy - A Mob Rescue and Arrest," *Albany Atlas and Argus*, April 28, 1860, 1/8; Samuel May, *The Fugitive Slave Law and Its Victims* The Black Heritage Library Collection (Books for Libraries Press: Freeport, N.Y., 1970), First Published, 1861, 134-135; Siebert, op. cit., 85. The famous "Jerry" McHenry rescue took place in Syracuse, New York, October 1, 1851.

135. May, op. cit., 19-20.

136. Edward A. Collier, *A History of Old Kinderhook* (G.P. Putnam's Sons: New York & London, 1914), 148.

137. Myra B. Young Armstead, "The Historical Profile of Black Saratoga, 1800-1825," in *Heritage Un-*

covered: The Black Experience in Upstate New York, 1800-1925 (Chemung County Historical Society, Inc.: Elmira, New York, 1988), 28, 34; Corbett, op. cit., 6. Cf. Sue Eakin and Joseph Logsdon, ed., *Twelve Years a Slave* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1977).

138. *James F. Brown Diary*, 10 volumes, 1829-1861, New York Historical Society, N.Y. Cf. Virginia E. Verplanck, *The Verplanck Garden at Mount Guilian Fishkill-On-Hudson* (n.d.), 12.

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140. *The Zion Trumpet* (New Haven, Conn., January, 1907), 18.

141. Cf. Maniya and Roberts, op. cit., 79.

142. Interview with Leonard Cooke, Nyack, N.Y., June 7, 1988; "An Historical Sketch of St. Charles AME Zion Church, Sparkill, N.Y., 1865-1945," Leonard Cooke Collection; Stuart M. Blumin, "Church and Community: A Case Study of Lay Leadership in Nineteenth-Century America," *New York History*, LVI, 4, (October 1975), 398-399; Collier, op. cit., 282; Young Armstead, "An Historical Profile," 34.

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144. George R. Howell and Jonathan Tenney, eds., *Bicentennial History of Albany; History of the County of Albany, N.Y. From 1609 to 1186* (W.W. Munsell & Co., Publishers: New York, 1886), 726.

145. Judy Shepard and Pamela Newkirk, "Adam Blake: Black Hero or a White Man?" *The Knickerbocker News*, March 4, 1987, 1A/3-4.

146. "The Origin and Progress Together, With the Quarter Century Report of the United Sisters in Friendship," William H. Myers, founder.

147. Howell and Tenney, op. cit., 726.

148. Interview with Harriette Bowie Lewis Van Vranken and Virginia Elaine Lewis Brown, Albany, N.Y., May 3, 1988.

149. Cf. Henry Noble MacCracken, *Blithe Dutchess; The Flowering of an American County from 1812* (Hastings House: New York, 1958). MacCracken cites the repeated violent confrontations between Blacks and other white ethnic groups on the streets of Poughkeepsie, N.Y., including Italians.

150. Cf. Harmannus Hoetink, *Slavery and Race Relations in the Americas; Comparative Notes on their Nature and Nexus* (Harper and Row, Publishers: New York, 19730, 18. In 1862 at the Lorilland Tobacco Factory in New York City, Blacks were forced out of their jobs by whites who threatened management with a "walk off," and got a promise from management that Blacks would not be hired in the future. See Herman D. Bloch, *The Circle of Discrimination; An Economic and Social Study of the Black Man in New York* (New York University Press: N.Y., 1969), 34; Edgar McManus, "Anti-Slavery Legislation in New York," *Journal of Negro History*, XLVI, 4 (October 1961) 212.

151. Hirsh, Jr., op. cit., 418.

152. *Ibid.*, 418-419.

153. *Ibid.*, 419.

154. Crane, op. cit., she cites *The Poughkeepsie Telegraph* 1836 and *The Poughkeepsie Journal* 1837. Cf. Amy Pearce Ver Nooy, "The Anti-Slavery Movement in Dutchess County, 1835 - 1854," *Year Book* Dutchess County Historical Society 28 (1943), 57-65. Phyllis F. Field, *The Politics of Race; The Struggle for Black Suffrage in the Civil War Era* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, N.Y., 1982).

155. Edward S. Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States of North America, from April, 1833, to October, 1834* (3 Vols., London, 1835); Cf. Carter G. Woodson, *The Mind of the Negro*, 447, where he quotes Frederick Douglass' statement about the treatment of black passengers on board Hudson River steamers: "[Blacks] are compelled sometimes to stroll the deck nearly all night, before they can get a place to lie down and that place frequently unfit for a dog's accommodation." Cited in Hirsh, Jr., op. cit., 424-425.

156. Daniel J. Walkowitz, *Worker City, Company Town: Iron and Cotton - Worker Protest in Troy and Cahoes, New York, 1855-84* (University of Illinois Press: Chicago, 1978). Cf. Herman D. Bloch, *The Circle of Discrimination* 24; William E. Rowley, "The Irish Aristocracy of Albany, 1798-1878," *New York History*, LII, 3 (July 1971), 275-304.

157. Maniya and Roberts, op. cit., 55; Clyde Griffen and Sally Griffen, *Natives and Newcomers: The Ordering of Opportunity in Mid-Nineteenth Century Poughkeepsie* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge and London, 1978, 1978), 31. Lawrence H. Maniya and Patricia A. Kaurouma, "You Never Heard About Their Struggles: Black Oral History in Poughkeepsie, New York," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and*

History (July 1980), 59; Bloch, *Circle of Discrimination*, 33; Curry, op. cit., 33-34.

158. Rowley, op. cit., 276.

159. *Ibid.*, 289.

160. *Ibid.*, 289-290.

161. *Ibid.*, 279.

162. Cited in Thomas J. Davis, "Three Dark Centuries Around Albany: A Survey of Black Life in New York's Capital City Area Before World War I," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 7, 1 (January 1978), 19.

163. Rowley, op. cit., 279.

164. Joshua Gordon Hinerfeld, "The Fading Veneer of Equality," *Year Book* Dutchess County Historical Society, 68 (1983), 93.

165. *Ibid.*, 92.

166. *Ibid.*

167. *Ibid.*, 92; Griffen and Griffen, op. cit., 235, 237.

168. Rowley, op. cit., 287. Griffens quoted in Maniya and Roberts, op. cit., 85.

169. Walkowitz, op. cit., 31.

170. *Ibid.*, 22.

171. *Ibid.*, 111.

172. *Ibid.*, 44.

173. Bloch, *Circle of Discrimination*, 40; and interview with Ms. Berta Proctor, Kingston, NY, March 25, 1983.

174. Walkowitz, op. cit., 33.

175. Bloch, *Circle of Discrimination*, 37.

176. Hinerfeld, op. cit., 91.

177. *Ibid.*, 91.

178. Curry, op. cit., 98.

179. *Ibid.*, 59. Curry notes an increase in residential segregation in Albany between 1820 and 1840, but later indicates that it abates "with a doubling of the number of wards [in the city]."

180. Curry, op. cit., 136-146; Bloch, *Circle of Discrimination* where he quotes an 1815 description of health and death conditions in New York City, 25 (note 29).

181. Curry, op. cit., 79.

182. J.D. Burn, *Three Years Among the Working Classes in the U.S. During the War* (London 1865), 22-23. Cited in Bloch, *Circle of Discrimination*, 35.

183. Cf. Maniya and Roberts, op. cit., 80.

184. "Newburgh Made Contributions to Union Army," *The Evening News*, April 28, 1969, 7B.

185. Edgar Mayhew Bacon, *Chronicles of Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow* (G.P. Putnam's Sons: New York, 1909), 145.

186. Williston H. Lafton, "Northern Labor and the Negro During the Civil War," *Journal of Negro History*, XXXIV, 1 (January 1949), 272.

187. "Roger E. Ritzmann to Gail Schneider, September 7, 1984," The State Education Department, Albany, N.Y. Gail Schneider Ulster County Black History Research Notes. The letter indicates that muster rolls of the 20th, 26th, and 31st are on deposit in the N.Y.S. archives.

188. Cf. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Massachusetts in the Army and Navy During the War of 1861-*

1865 (Wright and Potter Printing Co., State Printers: Boston, 1896), II, 680, 689; William W. Brown, *The Negro in the American Rebellion* (A.G. Brown & Co., Publishers: Boston, 1885).

189. An idea of the Lincoln Patriotic League of Orange County, the plaque was erected February 12, 1909 on Abraham Lincoln's birthday, and reads: "To the Memory of the Colored Volunteers of Orange County who Responded to the Call of Abraham Lincoln."

190. Cf. J. Wilson Poucher and Helen Wilinson Reynolds, *Old Gravestones of Dutchess County New York* (Collections of the Dutchess County Historical Society (Poughkeepsie, N.Y., 1924), II, 120.

191. James H. Smith, *History of Dutchess County New York* (D. Mason & Co.: Syracuse, N.Y., 1882), 548.

192. *Ibid*, 478.

193. Guin Caro, "Black Civil War Soldiers from 'The Hills,'" 12-15.

194. Phyllis F. Field, *Politics of Race in New York*, 95.

195. Davis, "Dark Centuries Around Albany," 17; Interview with Harriette Bowie Lewis Van Wranken and Virginia Elaine Brown, May 3, 1988. Mrs. Van Wranken states that the work behind the "bill" was that of her father, Charles Lewis. The name Lundy is from the abolitionist Benjamin Lundy; Ena L. Farley, "The Denial of Black Equality Under the States Right Dictum: New York, 1865 to 1873," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 1, 1 (January 1977), 19.

196. Farley, op. cit., 19.

197. *Ibid.*, 21.

198. Davis, "Dark Centuries Around Albany," 17; Interview with Harriet Bowie Lewis Van Wranken and Virginia Elaine Brown, May 3, 1988.

199. Cf. Maniya and Roberts, op. cit., 83.

200. *Ibid.*, 82.

201. *Ibid.*, 83.

202. *Ibid.*, 83-84.

203. Carleton Mabee, "Toussaint College: A Proposed Black College for New York State in the 1870s," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 1,1 (January 1977), 33.

204. *Ibid.*, 26.

205. Quoted in Mabee, "Toussaint College," 26.

206. Mabee, "Toussaint College," 27.

207. *Ibid.*, 30-31.

208. *Ibid.*, 32.

209. Cf. Maniya and Kauronma, "You Never Heard about their Struggles," 58.

210. Clyde Griffen, "Changing Neighborhoods of Poughkeepsie," 140.

211. Rayford Logan, *The Betrayal of the Negro.* MacMillian, New York 1965), Chapter V.

On Freedom's Threshold:
The African American Presence in Central New York, 1760-1940.

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Geography and history have conspired to give Central New York a unique place in the history of our state.[1] The region was once part of the "Burned-Over District" because of the revival fires of the 1820s and 1830s, and it has been called an "inland empire" because of its distinctive political, economic and social history. African Americans have been present in this section of New York State since the earliest white settlements, but an accounting of the black experience has been neglected. This may be due, in part, to the popular perception that African American history in New York State is of little importance outside of the populous urban centers, especially New York City. As late as 1910, the seventeen counties under consideration had a combined total of only 7,038 black residents, while New York County alone had 64,651. Onondaga County had the most black residents (1,296), while Cortland County had the least (71).[2]

Harriet Tubman is the most well-known African American to have made her home in Central New York. She is representative of the many blacks both before and after the Civil War who gave themselves over to the hope that Central New York might serve as freedom's threshold. Geographically positioned between the South's slavery and Canada's freedom, Central New York offered the promise of racial egalitarianism. But, as we shall see, African Americans remained a distinct minority in the region and encountered many obstacles as they sought to enter fully freedom's house.

FROM THE COLONIAL ERA TO 1830

"Everywhere that slavery exists," Austin Steward said of his experiences in Steuben County, " it is nothing but *slavery*. I found it just as hard to be beaten over the head with a piece of iron in New York as it was in Virginia."[3] In 1804 Captain William Helm brought about forty slaves, including Steward, his parents, and a sister, first to Sodus Bay and then to Bath. But many of the African Americans known to have been present in provincial New York were quite isolated from other blacks. They were themselves pioneers on the rough frontier of the Military Tract and the Phelps and Gorham Purchase out of which Central New York developed after the American Revolution.

Silas Bowker visited the Onondaga Salines in 1774, long before the Village of Syracuse was established, and discovered that "the manufacture of salt was wholly in the hands of two negro men, deserters from their master in Esopus, who used brass kettles for this purpose, and whose only customers were the neighboring Indians."[4] The salt springs on the bank of Onondaga Lake soon attracted white squatters onto the lands of the powerful Iroquois nation, and some settlers brought their slaves with them. Isaac Wales, the "property" of John Fleming, came in 1810. He learned to read and write, worked on the Erie Canal and eventually purchased his freedom. He obtained property and a home in Syracuse and advertised his services as a chimney sweep.[5]

African Americans also were present in what would become known as the Southern Tier at a very early date. Betsy Douglass, sometimes referred to as Way-Way, is said to have lived in Chugnutt, an Indian village on the Susquehanna River before the Revolutionary War. Born about 1767 to a runaway soldier from Fort Stanwix and his slave mistress, she was "given" to the Nanticoke Indians among whom she lived for nearly a decade prior to the settlement of Vestal (Broome County) by whites.[6] John Johnson's account of an expedition into the Painted-Post country (Chemung County) tells of two blacks in Assining (later Corning) about 1764, though their legal status is unclear.[7]

Some of the African American pioneers in Central New York were slaves, others indentured servants, and still others "free people of color." Their names are difficult to recover, for the 1820 census was the first to list blacks by name. Prior to that time, as in the first federal census of 1790, blacks were simply recorded as belonging to the households of whites, usually as slaves but in some cases as indentured servants. Early census returns reveal that the African American population in Central New York increased slowly as white settlements grew. In 1800 there were ten African Americans in Elmira. By 1810 there were thirteen slaves in eleven Elmira households, and by 1820 this number had increased to eighteen.[8]

Blacks born in New York State after July 4, 1799 were legally to be counted as indentured servants according to the Gradual Manumission Act of 1799. These individuals had to serve their masters until they were twenty-eight years old, in the case of males, or twenty-five years old, if female, and then were legally "free colored persons," as ten Elmira residents already were in 1820. The status of those who were slaves would also come under review, for in 1817 New York State enacted another gradual abolition law, which was retroactive and provided for the uncompensated emancipation of any African American who was then a slave, with the exception of those born before July 4, 1799. They were to be emancipated on July 4, 1827, at which time all African Americans in the state were to be considered as free persons.[9]

Austin Steward obtained his freedom via a technicality in the law. Determined to become, in his words, "my own possessor," Steward often considered running away or obtaining his freedom by joining the army. He soon learned that as Captain Helm had hired him out to another white farmer in violation of an 1801 statute relating to the hiring out of slaves in New York State, he could sue for his freedom. Steward sought the assistance of members of the New York Manumission Society, which was organized in 1785 to promote an emancipation bill. In 1815, the brother of the society's president took Austin, now about twenty-two, into his family and paid him wages. "I cannot describe to a free man, what a proud manly feeling came over me," Steward later wrote, "when I hired to Mr. C. [Otis Comstock] and made my first bargain, nor when I assumed the dignity of collecting my own earnings." Sometime later Captain Helm attempted to regain ownership of Steward and visited Comstock. But Comstock informed Helm that Austin was "*not* 'his boy,' and as such he would not give me up; and further, that I was free by the laws of the State."[10]

Some slaves in Central New York obtained their freedom by escaping from their masters, long before there was anything like an organized Underground Railroad. Peter Wheeler, a slave brought to Ludlowville (Cayuga County) in 1800 obtained his freedom when white neighbors urged him to leave his master, who was holding him in violation of the provisions of the Gradual Manumission Act of 1799. Wheeler ran away in 1806. In an interview in 1839, he recalled, "I now began to feel somethin' like a man, and the dignity of a human being began to creep over me, and I enjoyed my liberty when I got it, I can tell you."[11]

Some slaves were able to purchase their freedom. Peter Webb of Caroline (then in Tioga County) agreed with his master in 1811 to labor until he amassed three hundred and fifty dollars plus interest. Webb did lumbering and worked as a hostler in Ithaca and then in December 1818 received the following affidavit signed by his former owner and witnessed by the Town Clerk of Speedsville:

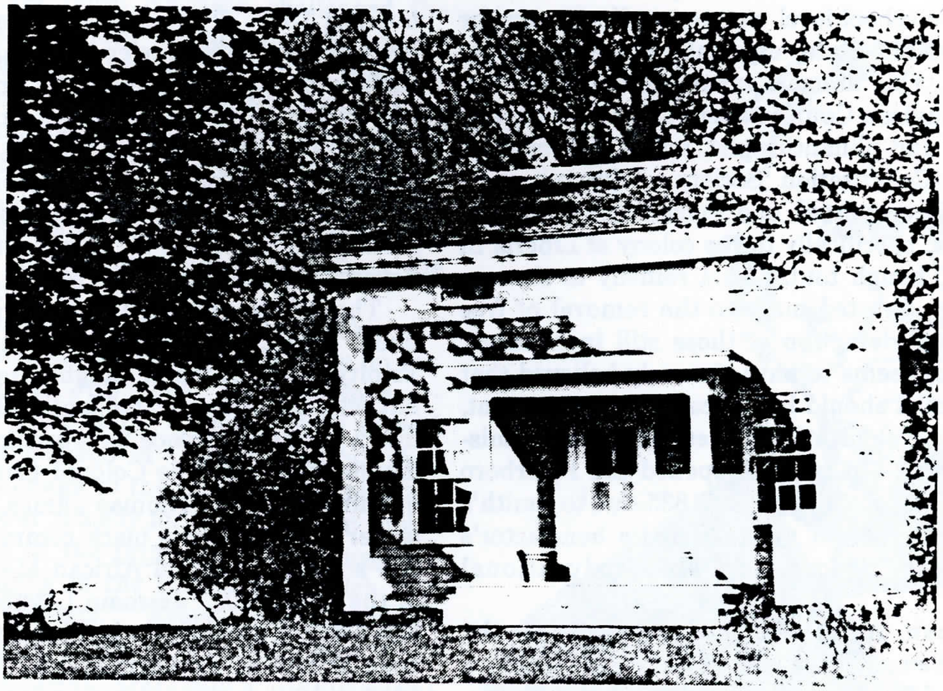
> This is to certify that I have this day agreed to discharge my man, Peter, known by the name of Peter Webb, from all further servitude as a slave; that he is free to act for himself as a free man from this time forward.[12]

After receiving his manumission paper, Peter married and farmed for himself. He was deeply religious and took an active interest in the welfare of fellow blacks. Though a Baptist, he helped organize an African Methodist church in Ithaca in 1833. The father of eleven children, his descendants can be traced for many years in the history of Tompkins County.

African Americans in New York State celebrated total emancipation on July 5, 1827, though whites did not recognize the day as an official holiday. The *Ithaca Chronicle* reported on the consequences: "Every man must be his own servant for the day; and many fair hands are constrained to engage in culinary and household matters."[13] Austin Steward participated in a celebration in Rochester, where with band music, and booming cannon, a large crowd rejoiced over emancipation. Steward addressed those assembled: "Let us as one man, on this day resolve that henceforth, by continual endeavors to do good to all mankind, we will claim for ourselves the attention and respect which as men we should possess."[14]

Despite the abolition of slavery in New York State, blacks still faced many obstacles in the practical attainment of the rights and privileges that legal freedom entailed. In social, political, and economic matters, their lives were circumscribed by prejudice and discrimination. Very few had the economic means to be landowners in Central New York. A newly freed slave might very well remain on the farm of his or her former master to work for wages. Free black landowners were few in number. One significant exception was the Bakeman family of Granby (now Granby Center) in Oswego County.

Henry Bakeman was among the earliest settlers in the Granby area and accumulated a considerable amount of land, including two grist mills. His son Jacob built a post-and-beam house in the early 1830s which reflected African American folk architectural forms. Unlike the Anglo-American custom of using sixteen feet as the standard dimension of a side, Bakeman's house was constructed, like West African houses, with a twelve-foot standard. The house, which



Bakeman-Woodruff House

still stands at the corner of Route 8 and Harris Hill Road in Oswego County, is composed of two twelve-foot squares placed side by side to make a whole of twelve feet by twenty-four feet. Bakeman sold the house in 1845. Subsequent owners incorporated Bakeman's original structure into the enlarged front part of the present building.[15]

After the abolition of slavery in New York, African Americans gravitated toward the more populated communities and away from the countryside. For it was in the cities that they were forced to seek their livelihood, as laborers, domestic help, and more rarely in such occupations as barbers, hotel porters, and dressmakers. "Our people," Austin Steward complained, "mostly flock to cities where they allow themselves to be made 'hewers of wood and drawers of water;' barbers and waiters. . . ."[16] Steward believed that agriculture offered blacks greater individual freedom and economic independence, but his call for increasing the number of black farmers went unheeded. In a region where the ownership of land was the major symbol of wealth and status, blacks were excluded from competing on equal terms.

This can be seen in the debates concerning the franchise for blacks in New York State. Prior to 1821, "every male inhabitant of full age" who satisfied residence and property requirements was allowed to vote. Though few blacks possessed freehold estates to qualify, they were further handicapped when the property stipulation was retained for them in 1826 but eliminated for white males. Referendums for equal suffrage were defeated many times in succeeding years.[17]

A pattern of discrimination also persisted in education. Public schools, where they existed in the 1820s and 1830s, were mainly directed at whites, and the private academies were closed to blacks either because of cost or the attitudes of white supporters. A few blacks obtained an elementary education by attending one of the charity schools or academies sponsored by whites, particularly those associated with the manumission societies. Austin Steward, for example, tells us: "With my books under my arm, and money of my own earning in my pocket, I stepped loftily along toward Farmington, where I determined to attend the Academy." Though he spent three winters "with pleasure and profit" at the school, he was troubled by the thought that at twenty-three he was "yet to learn what most boys of eight years knew."[18]

According to Carleton Mabee's research, Utica and Geneva had Sunday Schools for blacks in 1815 and 1816, respectively. When state law mandated a public education for children between the ages of five and sixteen in 1841, blacks still found themselves without equal access. The trustees of district schools sometimes established separate but inadequate facilities for black students. This seems to have been the case in Canandaigua, Bath, Auburn, and Elmira, all of which created separate public schools for blacks in the 1840s. Jermain Loguen started a private school for blacks in Syracuse in 1841, but black students were not excluded from the city's emerging public system.[19]

Opportunities for instruction beyond the elementary or common school level were exceedingly rare for blacks in New York State, especially those outside of New York City. One unusual experiment took place in Peterboro in Madison County. Gerrit Smith, the wealthy landowner and philanthropist, was a supporter of the American Colonization Society. Organized in 1816, the Society assisted and encouraged blacks to return to Africa, specifically to the colony of Liberia in West Africa. Though touted as a remedy to slavery, the scheme was directed more to the removal of free blacks than the redemption of those still in bondage. Smith, however, seems to have sincerely believed that African Americans should be educated and then sent, under American Colonization Society auspices, as missionaries to Africa. In 1834 he opened the Peterboro Manual Labor School. It closed in 1835 due to Smith's financial misfortunes but symbolized its benefactor's lifelong interest in fostering black educational opportunities.[20]

Most African American leaders opposed the colonization scheme. They sought instead to improve the conditions of free blacks in the North by emphasizing self-help and self-improvement endeavors. For example, the black citizens of Utica organized a literary and cultural group, known as the Phoenix Society.[21] Black leaders encouraged hard work, thrift, respect for the family, and temperance in the use of alcohol. They were alarmed at the damage done by the abuse of liquor in their communities. In 1830 Austin Steward was operating a small grocery store in Rochester, was licensed to sell alcoholic beverages, and "making handsome profits." But he relinquished the business of dealing in "ardent spirits" after concluding that the traffic in liquor was the "most fruitful source of pauperism and crime."[22]

The church was second only to the family in importance to the development of black community life in Central New York. As their numbers increased in the cities and larger towns, African-Americans reached out beyond their families for mutual support in associative activities. Black churches were frequently the first institutions organized and controlled by blacks themselves. Segregated seating, or other forms of discrimination, existed in most of the white churches. Thus Central New York blacks sought their own houses of worship, usually Baptist or Methodist.

The oldest church structure in Ithaca today is that of St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church on Cleveland Avenue (formerly Wheat Avenue). It achieved state landmark status in 1978 and in 1982 was placed on the national Register of Historic Places. In the mid-1820s, a group of Ithaca blacks conducted religious meetings in a building at Green and Geneva Streets, and in 1836 they organized St. James. The congregation was affiliated with a denomination pioneered in Philadelphia by Richard Allen and chartered in 1816. The original stone meeting house has been greatly altered over the years though the stone walls and paneled door of the original structure are still visible. The Rev. Thomas James, who arrived in 1838, was well-known for the aid he gave to fugitives, and Jermain Wesley Loguen pastored the congregation in the 1840s. During its long history, St. James has distinguished itself in service to Ithaca's African American community.[23]

The 1830s were fruitful years for black associational activity in Binghamton and Syracuse as well. Trinity A.M.E. Zion of Binghamton began about 1827 but was not incorporated until 1838 and struggled to find a permanent place for worship. Blacks in Geneva, members of the Free Colored Church, had their own building in 1834. Thomas James, who was already a leader in Rochester's black community, helped establish a congregation of African Methodists in Syracuse in the mid-1830s. Jermain Loguen arrived in 1841 to serve as the pastor of what in more recent times has been known as Peoples' A.M.E. Zion Church. From 1910 to 1975 it was located at 711 E. Fayette and represents the oldest continuing black congregation in Syracuse.[24]

Independent black Baptist congregations in Central New York are generally of post-Civil War origin. The African Methodists, especially the Zion denomination which was based in New York City and became independent in 1822, were well-represented in the region and could claim the allegiance of such prominent figures as Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass. Denominations such as the Church of God in Christ did not have congregations in Central New York until after the migration of Southern blacks to the North in the twentieth century.

THE ABOLITIONIST PERIOD

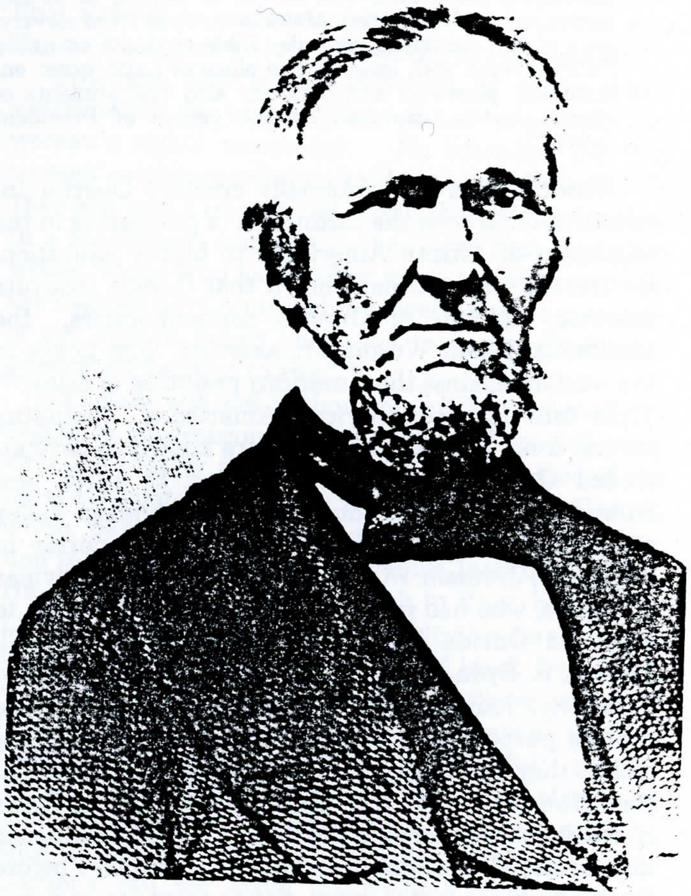
Central New York was the scene of extensive social and religious ferment during the Second Great Awakening, when the seventeen counties under consideration were part of a region known as the "Burned-Over District." The revivalist Charles G. Finney called for spiritual renewal and employed the so-called "new measures" in an effort to awaken church members to the urgency of the times. Historians, most notably Whitney Cross in the now classic study, *The Burned-Over District*, have rightly emphasized how religious enthusiasms and energies spilled over into a host of reform efforts. Finney's call for a moral reformation on the part of his hearers was interpreted by some as a summons to rid America of various evils, especially the sin of slavery.[25]

In 1830, William Lloyd Garrison challenged the supporters of the American Colonization Society to give up the idea of gradual emancipation via colonization, that surrogate for abolition, and adopt the goal of immediate, uncompensated, and unconditional emancipation in 1830. Some of Finney's converts were converted once again, this time to the abolitionist cause. Soon after the American Anti-Slavery Society was organized in 1833, its agents fanned out across the "Burned-Over District."[26]

Students at Oneida Institute, at Whitesboro in Oneida County, formed an anti-slavery society on immediatist principles in July 1832, the first such organization in New York State. Together with several abolitionist-minded citizens of Oneida County, they issued a public challenge to the partisans of colonization: "The only proper remedy for the sin of slaveholding must be found in the immediate, full, heartfelt respect of those rights in the invasion of which this monstrous crime consists. Every slave ought immediately and unconditionally to be emancipated."[27]

As the debate over Garrison's immediatist philosophy grew more intense, abolitionist societies began to emerge in Central New York at the local level. Jermain Loguen tells us that anti-slavery men in Onondaga County met in 1835 at the Baptist church in Syracuse to organize a county society but were forced by the anti-abolitionists to retire secretly to Fayetteville.[28] The Cortland County Anti-Slavery Society was organized on April 25, 1837. John Thomas, an attorney, provided leadership, and the membership was comprised of small merchants, farmers, artisans, physicians, and clergy. Most were of New England descent and belonged to the Protestant churches.[29]

Beriah Green, an early convert to Garrisonianism, played an important role in spreading immediatist principles throughout Central New York. As president of Oneida Institute since 1833, he was a stalwart advocate of immediatism and had successfully radicalized the manual labor school at Whitesboro into, as his enemies put it, a "hotbed of sedition" and abolitionism. Situated about four miles west of Utica along the Erie Canal, Green's school had been chartered as the Oneida Institute of Science and Industry in 1829 and was, until Green's arrival, principally devoted to the training of the young enthusiasts from Charles Finney's revivals. Beriah Green arrived in August 1833, a veteran of the academic and religious battles over immediatism at Western Reserve College Hudson, Ohio. He immediately set to work preaching the gospel of abolitionism.[30]



Beriah Green

Green had accepted the presidency of Oneida Institute on two conditions: (1) that the Trustees would assist him in his efforts to "'strike the chains' from colored limbs, etc.," and (2) that "the guardians of the institution" would agree to offer the educational advantages of the Institute to all applicants without regard to "the cord of caste."[31] Green proposed to operate the school on the manual labor plan. Students worked on the Institute's 115-acre farm and in its various shops both to offset costs and to identify themselves with those who labored for their daily bread. Critics, especially those angered by Green's de-emphasise of the Latin and Greek classics, dubbed his students "onion-grubbers" and sought ways to deny his school state educational funds and the support of the church-related educational societies.

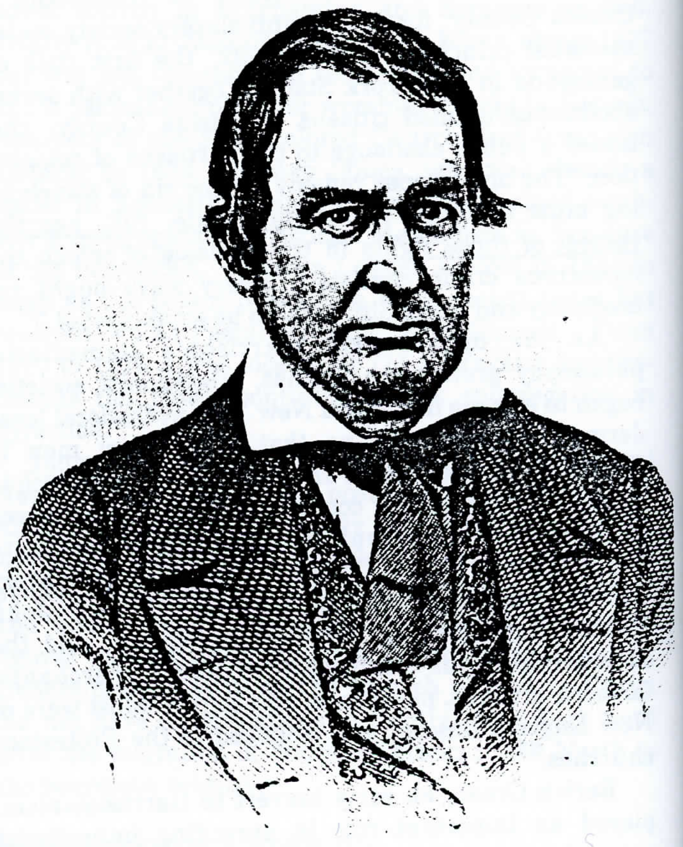
Green persevered and by 1837 there were 140 students in the four classes, including a number of African Americans. Oneida Institute was anathema to conservatives in the area simply because Green sought to train a phalanx of young abolitionists and reformers. But his second objective, the modeling of an interracial community as a practical test of abolitionist principles, was even more innovative and radical. When Josiah B. Grinnell (the future Iowa abolitionist, politician, and founder of Grinnell College) arrived in 1841, he witnessed the results of Green's open door policy. He joined:

> a motley company--emancipator's boys from Cuba; mulattos; a Spanish student; an Indian named Kunkapot; black men who served as sailors, or as city hackmen, also the purest Africans escaped from slavery; sons of the American radicals, Bible students scanning Hebrew verse with ease, in the place of Latin odes; enthusiasts, plowboys and printers: also real students of elegant tastes, captured by the genius of President Green.[32]

Historians have traditionally credited Oberlin Institute in Ohio with the distinction of pioneering in the admission of African Americans to higher education. But recent research has shown that Oneida Institute deserves, as one of Green's contemporaries, the abolitionist Elizur Wright, Jr., asserted, "first honor in the warfare against the American prejudice of color."[33] Thus far, fourteen African Americans, including several from Central New York, are known to have attended Oneida Institute. The first to enroll was Samuel Jackson, whose home was in Onondaga Valley south of Syracuse. While working as a porter in Rochester, Jermain W. Loguen was advised by Elymas P. Rogers, who had previously studied under Green, to enroll at Oneida Institute. Alexander Crummell, Thomas S. Sydney, and Henry H. Garnet, all of New York City, journeyed to Central New York with the express purpose of finding a place of refuge from the racism they had experienced at the Noyes Academy in New Hampshire. W.E.B. DuBois wrote in *The Souls of Black Folk* concerning the almost mystical influence that Beriah Green had upon young Crummell--"before the bluff, kindhearted man, the shadow [or racism's veil] seemed less dark."[34] Crummell himself recalled "3 years of perfect equality with upwards of 100 white students, of different denominations at Oneida Institute."[35]

Oneida Institute closed in 1844, unable to recover from the crippling effects of the financial panic of 1837. Green's radicalism and activities of his students, who harbored runaway slaves, printed the *Friend of Man* (official organ of the New York State Anti-Slavery Society) on the Institute's press, and politicked for abolitionism in Central New York, did not sit well with conservative donors. Green's enemies derided the Institute as "the negro school." But Beriah felt that by training "a goodly number of young men, of different complexions for stations of usefulness," Oneida Institute had been a success.[36]

Gerrit Smith was one of Green's staunch supporters, served on Oneida Institute's board of trustees, and gave liberally from his purse for the school.[37] Known as a friend and benefactor of many reform causes, he had been converted to abolitionism as a result of the Utica riot of 1835. Nearly six hundred abolitionists converged upon Utica on October 21st of that year for a meeting to organize a state anti-slavery convention. Smith had barely taken a seat in the Bleecker Street Presbyterian Church when a mob of anti-abolitionists, led by "gentlemen of property and standing," stormed in shouting, "Open the way! Break down the doors! Damn the fanatics! Stop your damn stuff!"[38] Smith was so incensed at this assault upon the right of free speech that he cut his ties with the American Colonization Society. In succeeding years he became one of the most prominent white abolitionists in Central New York and was widely known as the friend and benefactor of many individual blacks.



Gerrit Smith

Born in Utica in 1797, Gerrit was the son of Peter Smith, a partner of John Jacob Astor in the fur trade and other enterprises. Peter Smith amassed a great deal of real estate. In 1819 Gerrit took over his father's business affairs in Peterboro and extended them throughout Central New York. His large square manor house, built in 1799 and altered in 1854-55, stood on about thirty acres in Peterboro. Described as a "quiet, inert, dull village" in the 1870s by Smith's biographer, Octavious Frothingham, Peterboro hummed with activity when Gerrit Smith was in his prime.[39] Smith's hospitality was widely celebrated, and he entertained both the very wealthy and poorest of the poor. His diary contains the following entries:

> There come this evening an old black man, a young one and his wife and infant. They say that they are fugitives from North Carolina.
> A man from ----- brings his mother, six children and her half sister, all fugitives from Virginia.
> An Indian and a fugitive slave spent last night with us. The Indian has gone, but Tommany McElligott (very drunk) has come to fill his place.[40]

Smith's home burned in 1936, just before it was to become a state historical site. A small brick building which served as Smith's business office has been restored and marks the site in the hilly farmland of Madison County which once served as a center of humanitarianism. The bulk of Gerrit Smith's personal papers, which include many letters from prominent African Americans, was given by his grandson, Gerrit Smith Miller, to Syracuse University in 1928.[41]

Smith's vast correspondence reveals that he was at the center of an abolitionist network in Central New York which was eager to do something practical to end slavery.[42] This meant going beyond the moral suasion and apolitical means of William Lloyd Garrison. Smith played an important role in the formation of the Liberty party in 1840 and served several times as its presidential candidate. Organized in opposition to the Whigs and Democrats, this third party effort attempted to focus political debate on the single issue of slavery. The Liberty party benefited from the support of prominent blacks such as Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet, and Samuel R. Ward.

Frustrated with the ineffectiveness of Garrisonian means to free a single slave, blacks supported the proposition, as Frederick Douglass wrote, "that if the various provisions of the Constitution (right of trial Jury, *habeus corpus*, and others,) were faithfully executed, it would instantly free every Slave in the land."[43] Douglass, as did most abolitionists in Central New York, supported the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society after its split in 1840 from the parent and Garrisonian-dominated American Anti-Slavery Society. As a former slave, Douglass was willing to enter the political fray, despite the qualms of fellow abolitionists about the inevitable moral corruption of political means.[44]

Douglass' principal base of operations was in Rochester, where he had settled in 1837. He chose Rochester in part because he wished to be identified with the Smith circle of political abolitionists. Douglass used his newspaper, *The North Star*, to promote the Liberty party and called upon Smith on numerous occasions for advice and financial support. He and Smith appeared together on the lecture platform in an effort to offer voters a purer choice than either the Democrat or Whig parties. As a third party with a single-issue platform, the Liberty party had little success in national elections, but it served as a flag for black and white abolitionists to rally around.[45]

Douglass was in the advance of many white abolitionists in his support of the pre-Civil War women's rights movement. He attended the first women's rights convention held in Seneca Falls in July 1848 and was a close friend of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In a subsequent editorial in the *North Star*, Douglass wrote: "Many who have at last made the discovery that the negroes have some rights as well as other members of the human family, have yet to be convinced that women are entitled to any."[46]

Douglass was not without his critics, especially in regard to his decision to work with the Free Soil party after the Liberty party proved ineffective. One of the most articulate was Henry Highland Garnet. Garnet, whose parents had escaped from a Maryland plantation in 1824, graduated from Oneida Institute in 1839. He served a Presbyterian Church in Troy, backed the Liberty party, and fought for the elective franchise for blacks. Perhaps the most radical of black Oneidians, Garnet saw little hope for freeing the slaves except by their own efforts. He startled participants at an 1843 Liberty party convention, meeting in Buffalo, by calling for mass insurrection. "If you must bleed," he counseled those still in slavery, "let it all come at once--rather die freemen, then live to be slaves."[47] Garnet's call for slave insurrection troubled most Central New Yorker abolitionists, black and white alike, for they were still convinced that nonviolence was morally preferable to violence, for practical and philosophical reasons.

Another black abolitionist of note in Central New York was Samuel R. Ward. Though he did not attend Oneida Institute, he thought highly of Green and the school. Ward had been an agent of the New York State Anti-Slavery Society and was respected as an effective and imposing abolitionist lecturer. In 1839 he was licensed by the white Congregationalists, and in 1841 he became pastor of an all-white church in South Butler (Wayne County). Of that experience, he later wrote: "For the whites of America, my highest wish is that they may all become like the people of South Butler."[48] Ward went to Cortlandville (Cortland County) in 1843 and in addition to his ministerial duties started a newspaper, *The Impartial Citizen*. His editorials emphasized racial pride, promoted the Liberty party, and articulated an abolitionist philosophy rooted in Christian theology.

Ward's bold and open involvement in the Central New York abolitionist movement is all the more remarkable because he was a fugitive slave. Numerous fugitives were living in upstate New York or making their way to Canada because the region was heavily trafficked by those on the Underground Rail

Samuel Ringgold Ward

road. Ward assisted fugitives passing through Cortlandville, sometimes sending them on to Syracuse, Auburn, or Rochester. Central New York contained several important routes of that network of stations and conductors known as the Underground Railroad.

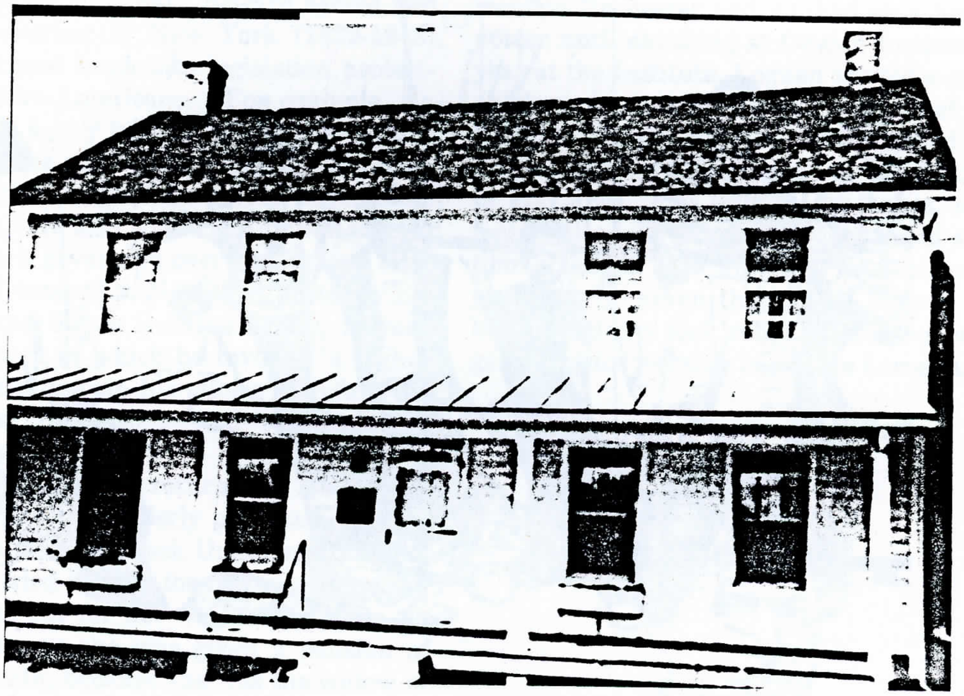
Fugitives fleeing up the Susquehanna Valley crossed the Pennsylvania-New York border into the Southern Tier County of Chemung. One historian has estimated that more than a thousand fugitives passed through Elmira, most between the years 1840 and 1860. There they might be aided by John W. Jones, an escapee from Leesburg, Virginia, who had decided to settle in Elmira rather than go on to Canada. Jones was chief station master from 1850 to 1860 in Elmira, personally assisting hundreds of escaped slaves. Some were lucky enough to travel on towards Canada and freedom on the Northern Central Railroad, which was completed in 1850. On June 6, 1860, Jones wrote William Still, the famous Philadelphia black conductor, regarding six fugitives:

> FRIEND WM. STILL -- All six came safe to this place. The two men came last night, about twelve o'clock; the man and the woman stopped at the depot, and went east on the next train, about eighteen miles, and did not get back till tonight, so that the two went this morning, and the four went this evening.
>
> O, old master don't cry for me,
> For I am going to Canada where
> colored men are free.[49]

Stories about Underground Railroad activity abound in other Central New York counties. In the Tomkins County village of Ithaca, the pastors of St. James African Methodist Episcopal church welcomed the foot-weary and frightened fugitives and hid them in the church basement or private homes.[50] In Danby (Tompkins County) runaway slaves using the Owego Turnpike sought refuge on the farm of Louis Beers. Beers harbored escaped slaves in secret rooms over a kitchen addition and in a barn behind the house. Leaders of the Presbyterian church in Hornellsville (Steuben County) served as "conductors" of the Underground Railroad and opened their homes to runaways. Marcus F. Lucas, an ex-slave who was a barber, was in charge of the Corning section of the underground railroad. His obituary stated: "By disposition he was very gentle. But he was courageous too, and did not hesitate to give his escaping fellow-Negroes the hand he thought that they deserved.[51]

Much of our information concerning sites that were stations on the Underground Railroad comes via oral tradition. By its very nature, the Underground Railroad was a secretive operation. Friends of the fugitive slave had to be concerned lest those given what was euphemistically termed "overnight hospitality" be discovered. Slavehunters passed through Central New York seeking to regain the "property" and the danger of recapture was real. Despite the paucity of historical documentation, we know of a number of homes which were "stations." Warren G. Olin, Tioga County Historian, describes a house, dating from about 1830, which still stands in Owego on the corner of Front and Ross streets. Fugitive slaves could come up the Susquehanna River, which reaches its furthest point north in Owego before making a bend eastward, and then enter the "safe house" via a tunnel, approximately four hundred feet long from the river's edge.[52]

Stories about alleged stations on the Underground Railroad frequently appear in the Central New York press. The romance and public interest in what has been called the "Liberty Line" is such that real estate advertisements sometimes tout older homes as having been "stations." Thus one needs to exercise caution about any claims regarding specific houses. The discovery of a secret room or mysterious tunnel does not necessarily provide historical confirmation. Nevertheless, Central New York contained a number of structures which were probably "safe houses." For example, in 1964 workmen engaged in demolishing the Richards' house in Skaneateles discovered a secret



Harriet Tubman House and Museum

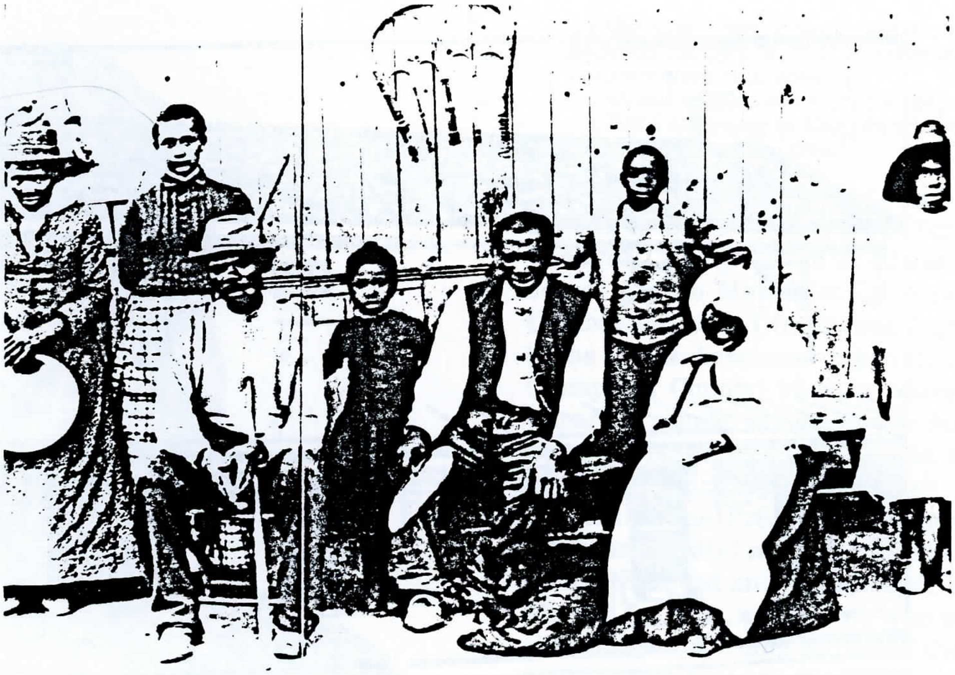
cubbyhole behind a second floor closet. It contained a wool blanket and a vial of poison, for use if recapture was imminent.[53]

Many of the homes closely identified with the Underground Railroad no longer exist. Others have been significantly altered by subsequent owners. The Cyrus Gates mansion, a Greek Revival structure on Nanticoke Road in Maine (Broome County), was frequently sought out by escaped slaves. Gates, a staunch abolitionist, outfitted a twenty by four-and-a-half foot space in his attic to hide fugitives. One of those he harbored, Margaret Cruzer, remained to work with the Gates family and was buried in the family cemetery. The Mecklenburg house in a Quaker settlement in the Town of Hector (Schuyler County) had twenty-three rooms, two of which were concealed under the main house. William Carmen, a devout Quaker, hid fugitives until they could be passed safely onto Canada.[54] Travelers along the state's older roads may still come across historical markers pointing to the site of a former Underground Railroad station.

The Harriet Tubman house on the outskirts of Auburn (Cayuga County) is certainly the most important site associated with the Underground Railroad in Central New York. Almost demolished in the 1940s, it was restored by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in the 1950s, opened to the public, and in 1975 was declared by the United States Department of the Interior as a national historic landmark. Harriet Tubman's home and the twenty-six adjoining acres were deeded to the Zion church around 1903, the time of her death. The modest two-story frame structure contains artifacts associated with Harriet's life, including her bible. Visitors, including hundreds of school children annually, are shown the house as well as the Tubman Memorial Library building, containing interpretive materials on Harriet's life. Harriet Tubman's grave is in Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn, guarded by a sentinel-like cedar tree.[55]

Born in Maryland around 1820, Harriet escaped from her Bucktown master in 1849 after she learned of plans to sell her further South.[56] She followed the North star, making her way up the Chesapeake peninsula and into Wilmington, Delaware, where she was aided by the famous Quaker underground Railroad agent, Thomas Garrett. In later years, Garrett helped Harriet with her efforts to rescue others from the "peculiar institution," a popular ante-bellum euphemism for chattel slavery. On December 29, 1854, he wrote J. Miller McKimm, a fellow abolitionist:

> We made arrangements last night, and sent away Harriet Tubman, with six men and one woman to Allen Agnew's, to be forwarded across the country to the city. Harriet, and one of the men had worn their shoes off their feet, and I gave them two dollars to help fit them out, and directed a carriage to be hired at my expense, to take them out, but do not yet know the expense.[57]



Harriet Tubman (far left) poses with fugitives that she helped on the Underground Railroad

Harriet Tubman has rightly been called the "Moses of her people," for between 1850 and 1861 she made at least eleven and perhaps as many as nineteen trips into slavery's domain and led an estimated three hundred individuals to freedom.

Harriet's method of operation took on the character of a silent invasion which was then followed by withdrawal. She brought some fugitives to Gerrit Smith in Peterboro, others to Auburn, and still others as far as Rochester. Harriet carried a pistol to ward off pursuers and "encourage" reluctant or frightened fugitives. A natural navigator with an almost mystical ability to read the landscape, she had a deep trust in the providence of God and constantly sought signs of divine guidance. William Still has left us a marvelous word portrait of this remarkable woman:

> The idea of being captured by slave-hunters or slave-holders, seemed never to enter her mind. She was apparently proof against all adversaries. While she thus manifested such utter personal indifference, she was much more watchful with regard to those she was piloting. Half of her time, she had the appearance of one asleep, and would actually sit down by the road-side and go fast asleep when on her errands of mercy through the South, yet, she would not suffer one of her party to whimper once, about "giving out and going back," however wearied they might be from hard travel day and night. She had a very short and pointed rule or law of her own, which implied to any who talked of giving out and going back. Thus, in an emergency she would give all to understand that "times were very critical and therefore no foolishness would be indulged in on the road."[58]

Charles Blockson, a contemporary authority on the Underground Railroad, writes: 'Dark of skin, medium in height, with a full broad face topped often by a colorful kerchief, Harriet developed extraordinary physical endurance and muscular strength as well as mental fortitude."[59]

John Brown, the leader of the insurrection at Harper's Ferry in 1859, so admired Harriet's courage and skills that he called her "General Tubman."[60] Southerners were so alarmed by her exploits that they put a price on her head, reportedly $40,000.

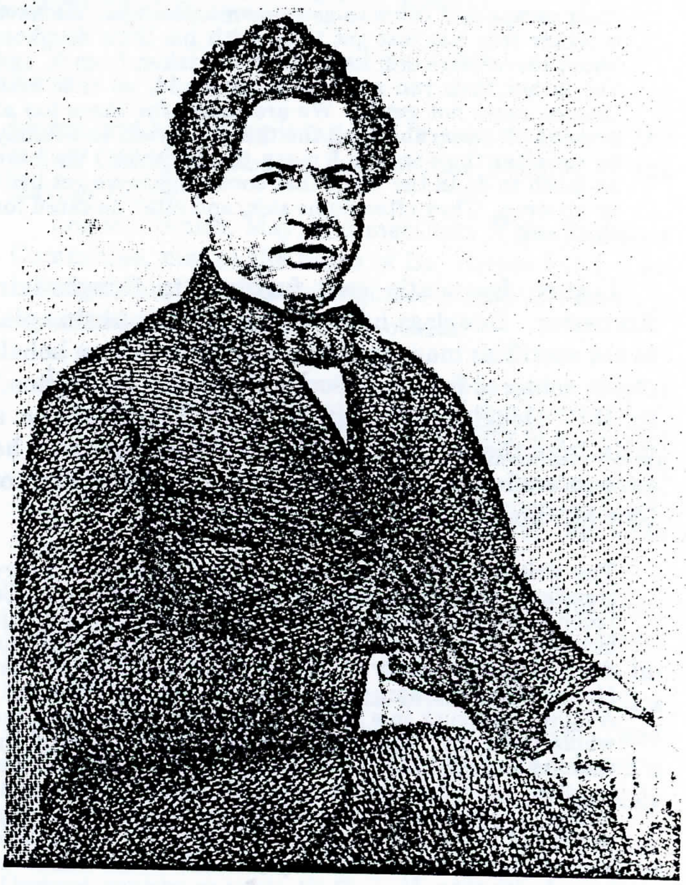
During the Civil War, Governor Andrew of Massachusetts sent Harriet to the Sea Islands off South Carolina. She worked as a nurse among the sick and wounded soldiers and freed slaves, despite the risks of disease and death so common in battlefield conditions. Disguised as a man, she scouted behind enemy lines and passed on intelligence to the commanding Yankee officers. She organized a small party of scouts and river boat pilots who made several reconnaissance trips along the coast of South Carolina. On July 10, 1863, the Boston paper *Commonwealth* reported that the diminutive but indomitable Tubman had led an expedition up the Combahee River and editorialized: "The desperation of a poor black woman has power to shake a nation that so long was deaf to her cries."[61]

About 1850 she settled in Auburn, where in 1857 the former governor of New York, William Henry Seward, took an interest in her welfare and assisted her in purchasing a home. The Seward house on 33 South Street is itself a registered historic landmark and open to the public. According to several sources, fugitive slaves hid in Seward's barn which was connected to the house by a tunnel. Seward served two terms as Whig Governor of New York (1839-1843) during which he signed important legislation protecting the rights of Afro-Americans. For example, an 1840 act guaranteed a jury trial for all alleged fugitive slaves, and in 1841 the governor signed legislation requiring that all children, regardless of race, have access to public education. He also waged a number of legal battles with Southern governors over the right of fugitive slaves who had escaped to New York State. While serving in the United States Senate in 1850, Seward made a famous speech in which he invoked "a higher law than the Constitution" in his efforts to refute the slave-holders appeal to Constitutional "rights" in the protection of slavery.[62]

After the Civil War, Harriet returned to Auburn, to which she had brought her elderly parents. In 1869 she married Nelson Davis, a black Union veteran who died in 1890. She tried in vain for many years to obtain the pension due her for her wartime service. At the turn of the century she was given a pension of twenty dollars a month, because she was the widow of a Union veteran. Known as a "free-hearted woman," always ready to help the less fortunate, Harriet purchased twenty-five acres surrounding her home in 1896, with the intention of establishing a farm cooperative. She was especially concerned with the plight of the black elderly and maintained a home for them on her property. Harriet Tubman died at the age of ninety-three and was buried on a cold, blustery day in March 1913. On the evening of her passing, friends gathered about Harriet's bed and sang one of her beloved spirituals, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." She was the first black woman to be inducted into the Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls. Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, of which Harriet was a member, is about three blocks from Fort Hill Cemetery where Harriet Tubman, the "Moses" of her people, is buried.

Less popularly known than Harriet Tubman, Jermain W. Loguen is also important to the story of the Underground Railroad in Central New York. Loguen had principal responsibility for assisting fugitives who came through Syracuse and claimed to have assisted more than fifteen hundred during his abolitionist career. Loguen's autobiography, published in 1859 under the title *The Rev. J.W. Loguen, as a Slave and a Freeman*, is an excellent primary source not only for details of his life but also regarding events in Syracuse and environs in the pre-Civil War era. Loguen dedicated the volume to all friends of the fugitive slave and used the proceeds to offset the costs of operating Syracuse's Underground Railroad station.[63]

Born about 1813 in Davidson County, Tennessee, Loguen escaped in 1834 and made his way to Canada where he farmed for a few years. In the fall of 1837 he went to Rochester and worked as a hotel waiter and porter until enrolling at Oneida Institute. In his last year at the Institute, Loguen started a school for black children in nearby Utica. He met and married Caroline Storm and in 1840 settled in Syracuse. "Syracuse," Loguen reported to the *Colored American* in May 1841, "has its philanthropists, and those who feel for the colored man."[64] He found a black population of about two hundred in a community of approximately seven thousand. Loguen observed that black residents took religious matters seriously, were gathering for worship in private homes and planned to build a church. But education was almost totally neglected, so Loguen began a school with forty-four pupils in a building he helped erect. Licensed and then ordained by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Loguen held pastorates in Ithaca, Syracuse, and Troy. But his sacred vocation was as much that of an abolitionist activist as a preacher of the Gospel. He stumped for the Liberty party and, despite great personal risk, dedicated himself to assisting fugitive slaves. When the Rev. Samuel J. May came to Syracuse in 1845 from New England, where he had been an active Garrisonian, he took charge of the Unitarian church and opened his home to fugitives. So



Jermain W. Loguen

many sought refuge that a local Fugitive Aid Society was organized, and the Loguen home at 293 East Genesee Street was dedicated as the official station.[65]

Loguen worked incessantly to obtain food, money, and clothes for runaways. He openly advertised for assistance in the Syracuse press and published his calling card which invited fugitives to his home. In 1859 he reported in *Douglass' Monthly* details regarding his activities:

> The slaves come to us with their frostbitten and bleeding feet, and then we go to work to get them healed. Sometimes we have to keep them for weeks and months--we have two mothers, with a child each, to care for with us at present. Their husbands were sold, and they made their escape and came to us some months ago. We have a father that has just got to us with his little daughter about three years old; its mother was taken from it, and the father then ran away with the child, so that man thieves could not get it. We are caring for them too at present. It takes about all the time of myself and family to see after their wants; I mean the fugitives. We have so much to do in the night that some nights we get little or no sleep. They often come sick, and must be cared for forthwith.[66]

Loguen frequently sent fugitives to Douglass in Rochester. Douglass has left us a moving testimonial to the sacrifices made by Loguen and his wife on behalf of the refugees from the South's "peculiar institution." In 1857 Douglass was returning to Rochester via a train from the east and stopped at Syracuse, where he encountered a company of nine fugitives in search of "one Mr. Loguen."

> The writer had some curiosity, to see how these weary travelers, without money, and without friends, could be received by the family aroused from sweet sleep, at this late hour of a stormy night. We had scarcely struck the door when the manly voice of Loguen reached our ear. He knew the meaning of the rap, and sung out "hold on." A light was struck in a moment, the door opened and the whole company, the writer included, were invited in. Candles were lighted in different parts of the house, fires kindled, and the whole company made perfectly at home. The reception was a whole souled and manly one, worthy of the noble reputation of Brother Loguen, and showed that he remembers his brethren in bonds as bound with them.[67]

Due in no small part to Loguen's labors, Syracuse became known as the most openly abolitionist city in the nation. The city's reputation would be put to the test with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill in 1850. Part of the Compromise of 1850, this bill carried new and tougher fugitive slave provisions and made the problem of runaways a national or federal matter. Slave masters or their agents could now call upon federal officers to help in the recapture of fugitives. Suspected escaped slaves were to be taken before specially appointed commissioners, who were empowered to grant certificates to remove alleged fugitives back to the state or territory from which they escaped. Suspected fugitives were denied the right of *habeus corpus* and could not give testimony before the commissioners. Any person who obstructed the arrest of escapees or attempted to aid or harbor them risked a fine of up to one thousand dollars and imprisonment to a maximum six months.[68]

The abolitionists of Syracuse, a city of 21,901 whites and 370 blacks in 1850, viewed the Fugitive Slave Bill with contempt and alarm. Since the organization of a county antislavery society in 1835, the city had witnessed numerous abolitionist meetings and debates. In October 1839, two years prior to Loguen's arrival, Syracuse activists assisted in the rescue of Harriet Powell. She had been brought to the Syracuse House, a fashionable hotel, by a Mississippi family and was described as "as richly dressed as her mistress." Tom Leonard, a black waiter at the hotel, talked with Harriet and discovered her desire to escape from the Davenports. Leonard passed on the information to abolitionists in Syracuse who helped her escape, disguised in a man's coat and hat. Harriet was taken first to Marcellus, then to a farmhouse near De Witt, and finally to the mansion of Gerrit Smith in Madison County. Harriet's former master offered a $200 reward for her recapture and boasted that he could obtain $2500 by selling her. Gerrit Smith gave Harriet winter clothes and helped her reach Canada.[69]

Soon after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill on September 18, 1850, a biracial vigilance committee was formed in Syracuse. The thirteen members pledged to protect any fugitive slave in the city. W.H. Burleigh wrote Gerrit Smith, "It would be almost certain death to a slave-catcher to appear, on his infernal mission, in our streets. No fugitive can be taken from our midst"[70] At a protest meeting attended by a crowd of some five hundred on October 4, white and black citizens voiced their opposition to the Fugitive Slave Bill. Mayor Alfred H. Hovery, though a Democrat and no abolitionist, declared, "Come what will of political organizations, and fall where I may, I am with you." Samuel Ward delivered a blistering attack on the Bill. But it was Jermain Loguen's speech which "uncapped the volcano."[71]

Loguen had returned to Syracuse from Troy, where he had been preaching, only one day prior to the rally against the Fugitive Slave Bill. He felt that he would be more secure among the friends of freedom in Syracuse. Though urged to seek refuge in Canada, Loguen defiantly rejected such counsel:

> What is life to me if I am to be a slave in Tennessee? My neighbors! I have lived with you many years, and you know me. My home is here, and my children were born here. I am bound to Syracuse by pecuniary interests, and social and family bonds. . . I don't respect this law--I

Ames House

> don't fear it-- I won't obey it! It outlaws me, and I outlaw it, and the men who attempt to enforce it on me. I place the governmental officials on the ground that they place me. I will not live a slave, and if force is employed to re-enslave me, I shall make preparations to meet the crisis as becomes a man.[72]

Loguen's words were in stark contrast to those of Senator Daniel Webster, who appeared in Syracuse in May 1851 and spoke from a small balcony of the Courier building: "Depend upon it, the law will be executed in its spirit, and to its letter. It will be executed in all the great cities, here in Syracuse; in the midst of the next Anti-Slavery Convention, if the occasion shall arise; then we shall see what becomes of their lives and their sacred honor."[73]

The Syracuse stage was now set for a dramatic confrontation. On October 1, 1851 the city was crowded with visitors to the state agricultural fair and abolitionists attending a Liberty Party convention. At the request of a slave hunter from Missouri, Deputy United States Marshal Henry W. Allen arrested Jerry McReynolds, originally called "William Henry" after his white father, but popularly referred to as "Jerry." He had fled Missouri about 1843 and was working in a cooperage and cabinet shop when taken before Commissioner Joseph F. Sabine for a hearing to ascertain whether he should be returned to John McReynolds, his Missouri master.

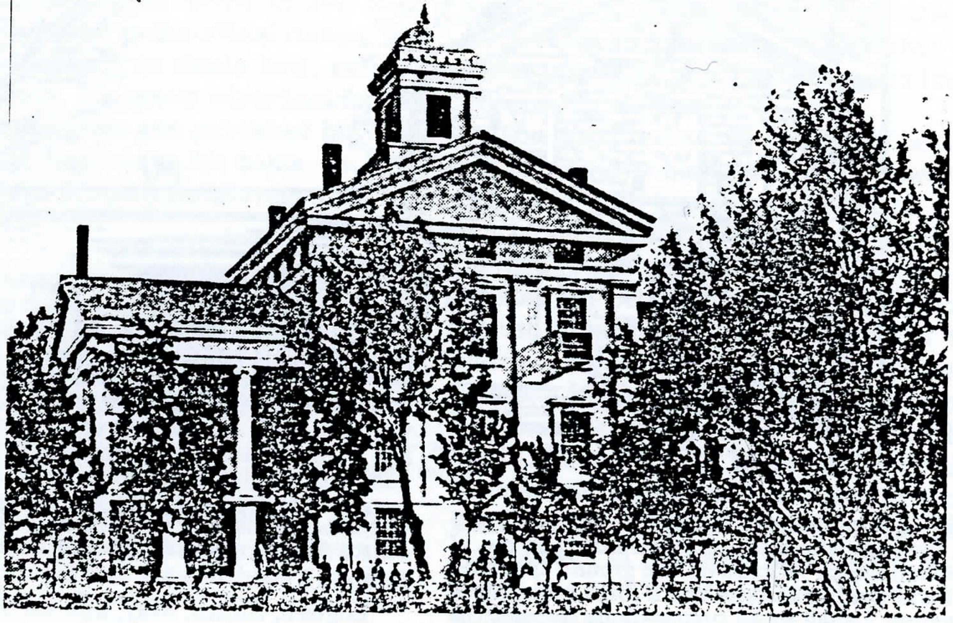
Word of Jerry's arrest quickly reached the Liberty party members assembled in the Congregational church. A signal bell tolled from the Presbyterian church, and a large crowd gathered at the Commissioner's office on the second floor of the Townsend Block Building, located at the corner of Water and Clinton streets. Gerrit Smith acted as one of the two defense counsels. When Commissioner Sabine adjourned the proceedings to find a larger room, Jerry, still in handcuffs, was hustled by supporters out the door and down the stairway to the street. City police recaptured him on the Lock Street bridge, put him in leg irons, and imprisoned him in the Police Office, located in the Journal Building of the Raynor Block.

Loguen, Smith, May, and members of the Vigilance Committee, met at the home of Dr. Hiram Hoyt, a local physician, in order to engineer a rescue. Smith is reported to have counseled the others:

> It is not unlikely the Commissioner will release Jerry if the examination is suffered to proceed--but the moral effect of such an acquittal will be as nothing to a bold and forcible rescue. A forcible rescue will demonstrate the strength of public opinion against the possible legality of slavery and this Fugitive Slave Law in particular. It will honor Syracuse and be a powerful example everywhere.[74]

The committee's plans were set in motion about eight o'clock on the evening of October 1. With encouragement from a throng estimated at two thousand, an interracial group of abolitionists broke into the police headquarters using a wooden battering ram, and liberated Jerry. They removed his irons and found a temporary refuge for him at the home of an unlikely ally, a pro-slavery Democrat named Caleb Davis.

Jerry was eventually taken to Mexico, New York in Oswego county enroute to Canada. While in Mexico, Jerry was harbored by Orson Ames, a dedicated abolitionist and member of the Oswego County Anti-Slavery Society. The Ames Greek Revival home still stands and is located at 58 West Main Street.[75] Jerry found freedom in Kingston, Ontario, where he farmed for several years, dying of tuberculosis in 1853. On November 19, 1851, a federal grand jury in Buffalo indicted eighteen persons, twelve of them Afro-Americans, for having "engaged in the Syracuse riots." All but three of the blacks and four of the white defendants left for Canada to avoid prosecution. Enoch Reel, a black laborer, was the only rescuer who was convicted. He died of consumption while his case was under appeal.



New York Central College at McGrawville

Jermain Loguen's wife and friends prevailed upon him to seek asylum, and he remained in Canada until the spring of 1852. He then returned to Syracuse, traveled throughout Central New York ministering to various congregations, and spread the gospel of abolitionism. Loguen soon resumed his labors with fugitives as Superintendent of the Underground Railroad in Syracuse. The city observed the first day of October as Jerry Rescue Day annually until the Civil War and intermittently thereafter. Presently efforts are underway to erect a memorial in honor of those who participated in the Jerry Rescue.[76]

Central New Yorkers were rightly proud of their part in the Jerry Rescue, but another incident from the 1850s reveals that the region was not without problems. William G. Allen, one of Oneida Institute's black alumni, was appointed in 1850 to New York Central College in McGrawville (Cortland County). An interracial and co-educational institution, chartered in 1849 by the American Baptist Free Mission Society, the school received financial support from such prominent abolitionists as Gerrit Smith. Allen served as Professor of Greek and German Languages and of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres. He thus became only the second African American to teach at a predominantly white American college. Charles L. Reason was already on the faculty. In 1853, after Allen's departure, George B. Vashon, another black, would come to teach.[77]

In 1852 Allen announced his intention to marry one of his white students, Mary King, of Fulton. Incensed by this interracial professor-student romance, the local white citizenry threatened mob action in the neighboring village of Phillipsville, where Allen and Miss King were visiting friends. Allen's fiancee was taken back to Fulton and he under protective guard to Syracuse. The couple eventually went to New York City, where they married secretly in March 1852. Allen was forced to resign from the faculty of Central College and took his wife to England. The college suffered great public criticism and went bankrupt in 1858.[78]

The citizens of Geneva in Ontario County helped to redeem the reputation of Central New York somewhat in 1858. In that year Napoleon B. Van Tuyl was convicted of kidnapping two black freemen and attempting to sell them into slavery. This strange case began in November 1857 when Van Tuyl, a clerk in a Geneva dry goods store, abducted Daniel Prue and John Hite on the ruse that he was going to find them employment at a hotel in Columbus, Ohio. His true intentions were to take them to Cincinnati just across the river from slave territory. Prue escaped but Hite was eventually sold to a Kentucky slaveholder. Petitions were circulated in Geneva asking Governor John A. King of New York to commission agents to rescue Hite. Calvin Walker went to Kentucky, obtained Hite's freedom and pursued Van Tuyl, who was eventually returned for trial to Ontario County. Though he received only a light sentence, Van Tuyl was considered a disgrace to his family and the community.[79]

Though Central New York was an important center of abolitionist activity, the majority of its white citizens were not actively involved in efforts to end slavery. Some had economic ties to the South. For example, Elmira was the site of a factory which made "negro cloth" sold in the South and used by slave masters.

Conservatives resented the abolitionist agitators who were trying to use the churches as institutional weapons against slavery. In Whitesboro, the First Presbyterian Church experienced a schism when the abolitionist-minded members, led by Beriah Green, were forced out by a conservative faction led by the pastor, David Ogden. Churches also split over the issue of slavery in Syracuse, Elmira, and Peterboro. The abolitionists generally formed what were known as "comeouter churches," for they had come out of organizations corrupted by silence regarding the "sin of slavery." The First Independent Congregational Church (later Park Church) of Elmira was organized in 1846 by local Presbyterians who opposed slavery. Gerrit Smith led in the formation of the Free Church of Peterboro, and abolitionists in Syracuse organized a Congregational Church after leaving the Presbyterians.[80]

Sectionalist, as opposed to abolitionist, feeling increased in the 1850s as economic and political tensions heightened between the North and the South. The extension of slavery into the western territories of the country was a particularly troublesome issue, illustrated in the bloody Kansas-Nebraska struggle in which John Brown participated. Brown's name was not unknown in Central New York. He bought a farm near North Elba from Gerrit Smith and lived there from 1843 to 1851. Brown was anxious to recruit "soldiers" from among the few remaining black recipients of Smith's land grants. Smith owned thousands of acres in Franklin and Essex Counties, in the Adirondaks, and had given about 140,000 to nearly three thousand blacks with the hope that they would become farmers. Beriah Green and Jermain Loguen were asked by Smith to nominate worthy grantees. The land Smith gave away was only marginally suited to agriculture, and the Adirondaks winters were harsh.[81]

Brown visited Frederick Douglass, Jermain Loguen, Gerrit Smith, and Harriet Tubman, though it is unclear how much detail he revealed concerning his ultimate objective at Harper's Ferry. Douglass thought highly of Brown but had reservations concerning the practicality of his proposals. Loguen failed to attend a strategy meeting Brown held at St. Catherines in Canada, perhaps out of fear of becoming too involved in such a risky and as yet ill-defined attack upon slavery. Harriet Tubman had a recurrent dream of an old man with a long white beard who was struck down by a crowd and is said to have aided brown in obtaining recruits and money. Gerrit Smith was one of the so-called "secret six," prominent white reformers and abolitionists who gave Brown financial aid. After the raid at Harper's Ferry and Brown's capture, Smith denied being part of a conspiracy, suffered a nervous breakdown, and was temporarily committed by his family to the New York State Insane Asylum at Utica.[82]

CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

Brown's raid upon Harper's Ferry was a prelude to the Civil War. When the Confederates fired upon Ft. Sumter in 1860, the entire nation was thrown into the conflict. Central New Yorkers heard the federal call to arms and responded initially with enthusiasm. Caroline Richards, a young girl living in Canadaigua, wrote in her diary in April 1861: "The storm has broken upon us. The Confederates fired on Fort Sumter, just off the coast of South Carolina, and forced her on April 14 to haul down the flag and surrender. President Lincoln has issued a call for 75,000 men and many are volunteering to go all around us. How strange and awful it seems."[83] In May, she added:

> Many of the young men are going from Canandaigua and all the neighboring towns. It seems very patriotic and grand when they are singing, "It is sweet, Oh, 'tis sweet, for one's country to die," and we hear martial music and see the flags flying and see the recruiting tents on the square and meet men in uniform at every turn and see train loads of the boys in blue going to the front, but it will not seem so grand if we hear they are dead on the battlefield, far from home.[84]

Indeed it was not to be a grand or short affair, for the Civil War dragged on for four more years, and Caroline's diary later records the sad news of the loss of many of the "young braves" she had known from childhood who died amidst the thundering cannon and clashing sabers in the battles of Gettysburg and elsewhere.[85]

Central New York cemeteries are dotted with the graves of Civil War casualties, testimony to a war that began as an effort simply to restore the Union and ended as a crusade to destroy the system of slavery. One of the most interesting is that of Charles Highgate, located in section six of Oakwood Cemetery, just south of the Syracuse University campus. He was wounded five times in the taking of Petersburg and, like many Yankee soldiers, died in a military hospital, far from home. Unlike his white counterparts, Highgate had not been allowed to respond to the first call to defend liberty. The federal government waited until the war was going badly for the Union until announcing an official policy, in August 1862, to recruit black soldiers, and the organization of all-black units did not begin in earnest until after the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863. In the fall of 1863 black Central New Yorkers finally had an opportunity to fight for freedom's cause. Jermain Loguen led a recruitment effort and a black company was sent from Syracuse to join the Massachusetts and Rhode Island regiments.[86]

The Civil War conflict was brought to the Southern Tier of Central New York in an especially interesting way. The federal government placed Confederate prisoners in a camp at Elmira in June 1864. The camp occupied a plot of about thirty acres running about one thousand feet along W. Water Street from Hoffman and extending south to the Chemung River. Surrounded by a twelve foot plank fence, the camp contained about twelve-thousand Confederates. Almost three thousand died during their imprisonment.[87] John W. Jones, the ex-slave who was active in the Underground Railroad, was in charge of the burials and kept records of the location of each grave and the names of those he interred. The Woodlawn National Cemetery was at the rear of his farm. As sexton of the Cemetery, he saw that "burials were properly and reverently conducted" and erected wooden markers over the graves.[88]

The Emancipation Proclamation was welcome news to the friends of the slave in the North. Hundreds of white and black teachers and missionaries went south to assist the Freedmen in securing their rights and preparing for the future. One of the self-sacrificing and dedicated schoolmarms was Edmonia Highgate, the sister of Charles Highgate. Born in Syracuse in 1844, she graduated from high school with honors, taught in the Eighth Ward, and them became principal of a public school in Binghamton. In January 1864 she wrote the American Missionary Association (AMA) asking to be placed in the South or Southwest: "I am about twenty years of age and strong and healthy. I know just what self-denial, self-discipline and domestic qualifications are needed for the work and modestly trust that with God's help I could labor advantageously in the field for my newly freed brethren. . . ."[89]

Edmonia was first sent to Norfolk, Virginia. She taught day and night and was deeply moved by the sufferings of those who had waited so long for a chance to study geography and arithmetic. Because of emotional exhaustion, Edmonia returned to Syracuse at the end of the summer of 1864. She then traveled around Central New York raising money for the Freedmen. The Reverend Jermain Loguen wrote on her behalf to Gerrit Smith in 1865:

> She has been a very worthy worker both North & South among our Freed brethren. She enjoys the fullest confidence of this community and I must say she is much beloved by the freed men where She has been teaching in Norfolk and other places.[90]

The AMA sent Edmonia to Darlington, a rural town in northern Maryland, in March 1865, but she soon resigned in order to work among larger numbers of Freedmen. She went to Louisiana and served as principal of the Frederick Douglass School in New Orleans, which was housed in a former slave pen. White rioters attacked the white and black Unionists in July 1866, forcing Edmonia out of the city and into rural Lafayette Parish where she taught among the Creoles. She returned to New Orleans but resigned from teaching when the city's school board proposed a segregated public school system.

On October 17, 1870, the *Syracuse Daily Courier* carried a story under the title, "Melancholy and Sudden Death." Edmonia Highgate had been found dead in the house of an abortionist in Syracuse. Her wallet contained a ticket for her trunk of belongings which she had been forced to leave with a pawnbroker. During her year of lecturing, Edmonia had met John Henry Vosburg, a white man, assistant editor of *The National Quarterly Review*, whose wife was in a mental institution. We do not know the details of their interracial romance, but the tragic consequences became clear in the manner of Harriet's death. She was buried in an unmarked grave in Oakwood Cemetery. In the spring of 1988, in celebration of black and women's history in Syracuse, a headstone was dedicated to Edmonia's memory.[91]

The immediate post-Civil War years were anxious ones for black Central New Yorkers. Despite the Union defeat of the slave powers, it was not clear that the fundamental obstacles to full social and economic equality had been done away with. While some newly-freed slaves moved into Central New York after the passage of the 13th Amendment, which freed all the slaves, and a few came back from Canada where they had been in exile, the region witnessed no dramatic increase in its black population. But the nature of the black population was changing. For example, Syracuse had a black population of 435 in 1870. During the abolitionist era, most black residents of Syracuse had been born in the North, but by 1870 many listed their birthplace as in Southern states such as Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland.[92] The influx of southern blacks, though small in comparison with the Great Migration of the World War I period, brought new challenges to the established black communities, which were generally led by individuals who could trace tenure in Central New York back to the abolitionist heyday.

The passage of the 15th amendment in 1870 was greeted with jubilation for blacks saw the right to vote as an important guarantee of their full citizenship rights. Despite a heavy rain on February 24, 1870, a large crowd of blacks assembled for a "Grand Celebration" in Elmira. Delegations from surrounding towns and villages had been given reduced fares on the railroad. The celebrants marched, sang hymns, and heard speeches. Dr. W.F. Goodman, who presided over the festivities, sounded the keynote: "This is a day . . . millions would have been glad to see. Rice swamps, the bloodhounds, the thumb screws, and cat-o'-nine tails, the jail, the gallows, the outraging of wives and daughters have passed away, and we have been let into the light of liberty. . . ." Senator Hiram B. Revels, a black Mississippi Republican, addressed the throng on a more somber note. "Desert the Republican party," he warned fellow blacks, and "you will be voting away your last liberties, you will be voting away the liberties of your children for all coming time."[93] At the close of the "Grand Celebration," the audience joined in singing "John Brown's Body."

Blacks did give their support to the Republicans, the party of Lincoln, but after Lincoln's assassination, the Radical Republicans were locked in a fierce battle to "reconstruct" the South. By the late 1870s, conservative political and economic interests in the North and the South had gained control of the federal government. It now became clear that the dream of a truly biracial society based on Christian principles, such as envisioned by Samuel Ward and Beriah Green, would remain only a dream. African Americans in Central New York, as elsewhere in the North, still remained marginal to the social, economic, and political centers of power. They were yet on the threshold of freedom.

POST RECONSTRUCTION TO WORLD WAR I

Our accounting of the African American experience in Central New York after the Civil War and Reconstruction years is made difficult by a number of factors. Unlike the ante-bellum period, there is no dramatic focus similar to that provided by the fight against slavery and the Underground Railroad. No individuals emerge on center stage as prominently as did Harriet Tubman or Jermain Loguen before the Civil War. Historians have given little attention to the complexities and variations in black community life in the half century between the Civil War and World War I. These were supposedly Americans "Confident Years," a time of industrial growth, Victorian morality, diplomatic and military expansionism, manifold opportunities for those with Horatio Alger ambitions, and comfortable living, symbolized by life in elm-shaded, quiet, and well-ordered small towns.[94]

African Americans, however, did not participate on equal terms in the scramble for success during the so-called "Confident Years." They were still locked into menial jobs or served as domestic help in white Victorian households. As European immigrants streamed into the country, competition for the available unskilled jobs increased. Organized labor did not welcome blacks, and the owners and managers of factories gave preference to white workers. Given an unpromising future, Central New York blacks tended to look backward rather than forward. They celebrated Emancipation Day as a high water mark in their struggle. Jacob Crain, a black upholsterer, carpet layer, and piano mover in Seneca Falls, raised two hundred dollars from fellow blacks to commemorate Emancipation in 1895.[95]

Many of the European immigrants discovered that education was the single most important means to climb up America's social and economic ladder. Blacks, too, desired to improve their lives, but graduating from high school and college didn't mean much when employment opportunities were limited. The Reverend George Stevens, pastor of Syracuse's Union Baptist Church (later Bethany Baptist) voiced criticism in 1890 over the drastic decrease in black attendance at the high school level: "In this city is a grand university. Not one of our race is there. It is a shame! I go to High School and there I find one, only one.!"[96]

Black professionals such as teachers, doctors, and dentists were few in number, largely because educational opportunities were denied them. Even with the requisite credentials, the black professional found it difficult to establish and maintain a practice in Central New York, where black communities were small. William H. Johnson was the first black to graduate from the Syracuse University College of Law. In an address to other graduates in 1903, he said:

> It seems strange that there are not more of the colored students taking up the legal profession and especially when what few have done so rank among the best and ablest lawyers in the country. Strange, yes, very strange, that the majority of the colored lawyers start for the west and south. Why is it? Tell me, fellow graduates, is it because there is race prejudice in this state. . . ?[97]

Johnson could not find employment as a lawyer in Syracuse and had to accept a clerk's job.

Given the dearth of black professionals in Central New York, we can better understand the reaction in 1881 to the patronage appointment of Edward Wilson to the postal service in Syracuse. Only Philadelphia had a black postman at the time. Syracuse blacks are reported to have turned out in a celebration of the grand event: "Old men and old women, young men and young women and even their babies crowded the sidewalks and hung on the gates to see him pass by."[98]

Because of the many ways in which racism continued to prevent their entry into the circles of affluence and power in white-dominated Central New York, blacks turned increasingly toward developing a rich and varied communal life. New churches were organized and often still served a central role in black neighborhoods, but other black organizations also flourished. Fraternal orders had important social and cultural functions. Elmira had seven black Masonic Lodges in 1898. Syracuse had the Colored Odd Fellows. In 1892 Ithaca had a group of black Masons, known as the Henry Highland Garnet Lodge. In the early 1900s, black chapters of the Y.W.C.A. and Y.M.C.A. began to appear. Elmira had a black baseball team called the Omaha Giants, and Syracuse had the Pastime Baseball Club. Black students at Cornell University organized the Social Study Club in 1905, which evolved into the first national black fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha. Musical groups, literary clubs, temperance societies, and organizations dedicated to community service added to the richness of black communal life by World War I.[99]

Black Central New Yorkers used their leisure time in a variety of ways. Cakewalks, picnics, and dances were popular. The *Watkins Express* carried the following social item in 1885:

> At the cake walk and social hop held by the colored people at the Watkins Opera House on Thursday evening last, the prize was won by Mr. Richardson and Mrs. Hall, and the special prize for the best waltzers by Mr. Philip West and Mrs. W.A. Hall. The attendance was good and the pleasures of the occasion were complete.[100]

Visiting with friends and relatives, attending annual reunions, and sharing memories helped maintain a sense of community. Weddings and funerals were important occasions for family members to renew the bonds that gave their lives meaning. Since it was rare for blacks and whites to mix together in merely social circumstances, blacks developed intricate social networks of their own.

George S. Schuyler grew up in Syracuse in the early 1900s and recalled that though legally free, blacks were treated as "social pariahs." As a consequence, they had to create their own social life--"our little churches, our fraternal societies, our house parties, and our formal dances." But there were divisions even within the black community. Schuyler's mother prided herself on maintaining high cultural and household standards and discouraged him from associating with blacks who had recently migrated from the South because "they didn't know how to act." Young George was well aware of an "underworld class" with the "expected contingent of pimps, gamblers, roustabouts, hoboes, and tramps." Above this group were the "poor but respectable" laborers and domestics with homes and families but little schooling. At the top were the chefs, butlers, coachmen, and others who worked for wealthy whites and, according to Schuyler, did not "fraternize with the riffraff." As a consequence, they became "a socially in-bred group . . . which was rather painful in a group of less than one thousand in a city of one hundred thousand." Schuyler recalls that the daughters of the "better" black families had great difficulty in finding suitable mates given the small black elite.[101]

The problem of maintaining the black communal fabric was especially difficult in Central New York's less populous cities. H. Edmund Bullis, who lived in Oswego in 1894, recalled that there were only eight blacks in the entire community. They were either coachmen for the wealthier white families or belonged to the one black family--the Bentons. In 1898, a black regiment which had been on duty in the Philippines arrived at Fort Ontario. Their wives and children and others whom Bullis refers to as "black camp followers" came to Oswego. But when the troops left in 1911, the so-called "Black Belt" near the Post rapidly disappeared.[102]

Black populations actually declined in some parts of Central New York in the late nineteenth-century. As the pre-Civil War generation died, it was not replaced in equal numbers by new migrants. Oneida County's black population in 1875 was only slightly increased from 1845, and as late as 1940 the 951 blacks represented about the same proportion of the entire population (approximately one-half of one percent) as in 1890.[103] The African American population of Owego (Tioga County) in the Southern Tier peaked in 1892 and declined steadily thereafter.

One of Owego's oldest residents, Margaret Williams, was interviewed in 1982. Her grandfather was a drummer in the Civil War and her great-great grandfather served in the Revolutionary War. Given a plot of land in Vestal upon being discharged from Company B of the 26 New York Colored Infantry Regiment, Oscar Barton, Margaret's grandfather built a log cabin and farmed. Another grandfather, Wilson Ransom Scott, escaped to Union lines during the Civil War and, because he was good with horses, was brought to Owego by a Union officer. Margaret's father was a stone mason, who worked on several buildings at Cornell University, and her mother, who had come from Vestal, worked for a wealthy white family in Tioga Center. Margaret's husband was a barber, and she did domestic work for the president of the Owego National Bank, caring for the children, cooking, and cleaning. When asked, "Were there a lot of black women in that period who did domestic work?", she replied:

> Yes, that was about the only thing you could get, until the black people were going to school more. The Williams family had one daughter that went on and graduated from college. She taught, but couldn't get any teaching jobs around here. There was quite a few of them that left town as soon as they got out of high school. There was nothing open for you outside of domestic work. Men had better jobs than women. The men could do construction work; my husband was a barber. Men worked in hotels; some were chef. No matter

> who you were or how much much education you had, you had to go out of town to get work. That's why there's so few blacks here now.[104]

Black Central New Yorkers, while concerned primarily with day-to-day survival, did not ignore events and issues affecting African Americans in the country as a whole. For example, blacks in Elmira staged a protest against the showing of the D.W. Griffith film "Birth of a Nation" in 1915. Like such national organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, organized in 1908, they felt that the depictions of blacks in the film were insulting and degrading. They drafted a letter at a mass meeting and presented it to Mayor Harry Hoffman. The letter argued that the showing of Griffith's film "will embitter and reorganize society because it . . . is a travesty on history--a breeder of racial antipathy . . . shown to humiliate and embarrass the blacks and misrepresent a cause to the northern whites."[105]

WORLD WAR I AND AFTER

The World War I era was a critical time for African Americans in the United States. Woodrow Wilson's election to the presidency did not draw accolades from blacks, the majority of whom were Republicans and still suspicious of the Democrats. When America entered the conflict with Germany in 1917, blacks responded to the call to arms, though black soldiers were segregated from whites and received inferior treatment and pay in the military. Due to the demand for labor in the industrial cities of the North, thousands of southern blacks left the rural South. Urban centers such as Chicago, Detroit, and Pittsburgh witnessed a sudden growth in their African American populations. The so-called Great Migration of 1916-1918 had less of an impact on Central New York, for the region did not offer the economic opportunities that the major industrial centers did. For example, the shoe manufacturers of Endicott and Johnson City had long given preference to southern and eastern European immigrants over African-Americans in their hiring practices. As late as 1949, the Endicott Johnson Corporation employed only two blacks. Only three blacks lived in Johnson City and none in Endicott.[106]

Some Southern blacks did make their way to places such as Syracuse in the hope of escaping lynch law and of finding something better than being tenant farmers on boll weevil-infested cotton farms. On August 10, 1917, the *Marcellus Observer* carried the following report:

> The influx of Southern negroes is becoming serious in Syracuse. While many of them have gone to the larger cities, at least 150 and probably many more located in that city within the last two months. They are looking for work and although laborers are needed, many people will not employ the negroes because their white laborers quit rather than work with them.[107]

The in-migration of Southern blacks had an impact on the already established black communities. Delegates to a conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, meeting in Syracuse in October 1917, heard a call to action. J.H. Ellison, presiding elder of the Western New York District Conference, urged them to go after "these strangers" from the South who are anxious for a church connection. "A great many of the new families," he argued, "have become workers in the church and all this has stimulated a new order of things spiritually, besides bolstering up the finances in many instances."[108] Integrating the migrants into the existing black institutions and social structure was not easy or, indeed, wholeheartedly supported. Their rural ways and cultural differences in such things as style of religious worship resisted quick assimilation.

African Americans from Central New York fought in World War I as they had in the Civil War. But when they returned they found that the racial climate was being poisoned by the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan experienced a revival in the tensioned-filled post-war years, expanded beyond its traditional southern base, and targeted Roman Catholics, Jews, as well as African Americans. The Klans of New York met at the Chemung County Fairgrounds outside of Elmira for their state convention in July 1925. Elmira was then a city of about twelve thousand, with about two thousand black residents. Emmet D. Smith, a Mississippian, had begun recruiting Klan members in 1923, using Binghamton as his base of operations. The Klan appealed to white Anglo-Saxon Protestants who expressed intolerance of Catholicism and immigrant Americans in the Southern Tier. As the black populations were numerically smaller than that of the Catholic immigrants, the Ku Klux Klan did not employ racism as its major appeal. Nevertheless, the presence of the Klan posed a threat to the improvement of harmonious and progressive inter-racial relationships.[109]

The growth of black communities in Central New York's larger cities after World War I, and the Great Depression brought attention to attendant social and economic problems, such as poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. Black and white leaders began to discuss cooperative efforts to improve race relations and to deal with the needs of a predominantly urbanized African American population, such as better housing and employment opportunities. The Interracial Committee of Binghamton, which eventually became the Broome County Urban League, was organized in 1932 by fifteen black and fifteen white civic leaders. The group set up community centers, which offered arts and crafts programs, scout troops, athletics, and music classes for teenagers and clubs for adults.[110] The Cosmopolitan Community Center of Utica (Oneida County) was established in 1938 as a recreation center for black youth. In 1941 it occupied a small first floor apartment at 426 Broad Street and offered a limited program with emphasis on music and informal education.[111]

The story of the Dunbar Center in Syracuse is an especially interesting and instructive example of the contemporary concern for the social, cultural, and educational needs of urban African American communities. A black ex-convict named Jimmy LaGrin, arrived in 1918, opened a barber shop, and soon saw a need for recreational activities which might deter black youth from becoming involved in crime. He requested assistance from several members of the Commonweal Club, a white woman's community group interested in social service projects. The club provided financial backing after 1925, and began sponsorship of a community center. LaGrin left in 1924, but the Dunbar Center continued to expand its activities to include a scout troop, drama club, basketball team, and a chorus. By 1929 the Dunbar Center had become a Community Chest agency, and in 1930 Golden B. Darby, a former social worker, became the first Executive Secretary of the Center.[112]

Charles S. Johnson visited Syracuse in October 1927 on behalf of the Urban League to investigate conditions among blacks in the city. He found that the black population was concentrated in two sections, one running along Washington Street from the City Hall to the railroad overpass or tunnel at Beech Street and another section familiarly known as "Jewtown." The latter area had formerly been occupied by middle-class Jewish families and still contained a number of Jewish families, shops and small businesses.

The noted writer John Williams, author of *The Man Who Cried I Am*, *The Junior Bachelor Society*, *Click Song*, and other novels and essays, grew up in Syracuse. Born in 1925, he came to know "Jew Town" or "the Ward" as an insider. He remembered the Fifteenth Ward as a polyglot culture, with African American, Jewish, Italian, German, Polish, and Native American families. The Ward was an "entity unto itself" in which people "shared conversation and other small joys." Despite cultural differences, they helped each other, looked out for all the children, and, especially during the Great Depression, drew together for mutual survival. "In the ward," Williams has written, "survival of the other fellow and his children meant survival for you." Williams recalls that at dusk "you could see men of all sizes, shapes and colors returning to it from their jobs, such as they were."[113]

Jobs, of course, were the basis of survival. When Charles Johnson did his survey in 1927, he discovered no black professionals in Syracuse. Blacks worked as common laborers, garage employees, janitors, porters, and maids. One individual was a foreman at the Crouse Heins plant and another was employed by the state labor bureau. Blacks were generally excluded from labor unions, such as that comprised of moulders and bricklayers. There were in Johnson's words, "no successful Negro businesses save one small grocery store, and three small barber shops, and two or three pool rooms."[114]

Johnson interviewed members of the black community regarding their perceptions of current problems. They spoke of a need for improving employment opportunities, housing, service to youth, and the elimination of prostitution and "boot-leg" joints from black neighborhoods, and improving relations with black students at Syracuse University. Johnson visited the Dunbar Center, a house at 308 S. McBride Street. Part of his description follows:

> The house in which the Center is located, has five rooms on the first floor--two small parlors, a game room and kitchen,--all small. The second floor is occupied by a family and the director. The Center rooms were clean and neat but lacked appropriate furnishings: the library is used as a station for circulating books from the public library, but no books were in at the time. . . . Special days and hours are given over to different age groups; there are evening parties and dances with a small admission and the most important Center activity, according to the director, is the Sunday afternoon Forum, which is addressed by speakers of prominence. Their forums have an average attendance of about 40. The most recent subject was "I Want a Job." The Center is used by about 300 persons; its dancing program, it was complained, has been violently and persistently opposed by the Baptist minister. . . .[115]

In the years following Johnson's visit, the Dunbar Center expanded its services and activities, becoming a vital institution in the African American community.

Golden B. Darby, who directed activities at the Dunbar Center from 1930 to 1937, reported in 1937 that nearly three-fourths of Syracuse's black population had come within range of the Center's services. Darby, a former social worker, felt that the fundamental need in Syracuse was for the black community to join in a united effort to address its needs. He felt that the influence of traditional black organizations, presided over by the fraternal leaders and clergy, was waning and that new leadership was needed. "Meanwhile," he complained, blacks in Syracuse were "at the mercy of unscrupulous white politicians who select a "hand-picked leader who passes out two dollars at election day for votes."[116] In 1946, a local branch of the National Association for Colored People was organized in Syracuse, an indication that the old political order would come under close scrutiny.[117]

The World War II years proved to be important transitional ones for the African American presence in Central New York. An all-black regiment of 1,800 men from Harlem was stationed at Fort Ontario in Oswego beginning in 1941. From 1908 to 1911, when the 2nd Battalion, 24th Infantry had been housed at Fort Ontario, the enlisted men were black and all the officers were white. But the 369th Coast Artillery, a National Guard unit called into federal service in 1941, had only black officers.[118] A contingent of black military police arrived in Binghamton in the summer of 1942 to guard factories, bridges, and public works installations against sabotage. The Binghamton *Press* editorialized that while some whites had raised the "race question" and others had predicted public disorders, race prejudice was not to be tolerated: "This would be entirely out of place in peacetime, but is far more so in wartime." The black military police wore the uniform "of the protectors of our country" and were prepared to sacrifice their lives if need be.[119]

Due to a labor shortage, black farm workers were brought from the South in significant numbers to help with the potato crops in Steuben County after WW II. Black farm workers are still imported into Central New York but have not become part of the region's established black communities.[120] At the other end of the economic spectrum, major national corporations, such as International Business Machines in the Binghamton area, began recruiting college-trained black workers from the South in the late 1950s. These black newcomers, like the migrant workers, did not readily bcome part of the once geographically and emotionally close-knit black communities. One investigator discovered that the corporation-employed blacks tended to live in integrated neighborhoods in Broome County and had relatively little contact with the black families which could trace their roots back to nineteenth-century or had been in Binghamton for twenty or thirty years.[121]

While I have hinted at a number of trends, the story of the African American presence in Central New York in the contemporary era is beyond the scope of this essay. With the dramatic increase of blacks in the region's larger cities, beginning in the 1940s, there has been greater institutional, social, economic, religious, and political diversity. The Civil Rights movement, of course, had a significant impact on black Central New Yorkers, for public consciousness was focused upon national problems which were local ones as well. Inspired by Martin Luther King's challenge to segregation and discrimination in the South, Black Central New Yorkers looked closely at their own situations. They discovered that in many respects they still stood on the "threshold of freedom" and sought to change the patterns of history.

1.

The seventeen counties comprising Region III are: Broome, Cayuga, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Oswego, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, and Yates. No term precisely defines the section of New York State being considered in this chapter. It contains cities such as Auburn, Binghamton, Elmira, Ithaca, Seneca Falls, Syracuse, Rome, and Utica, as well as scores of smaller hamlets and villages. It stretches from the shore of Lake Ontario to the border of Pennsylvania along the Southern Tier counties, and contains most of the Finger Lakes. The Mohawk Valley lies to the east and the Genesee Valley to the west. For purposes of this chapter, Region III will be referred to as Central New York.

2. William Katz, ed., *Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968), 822. Syracuse had the largest black population of any community within Region III.

3. Austin Steward, *Twenty-Two Years a Slave, and Forty Years a Freeman* (1856; Rpt. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1968), 107. "Bath: Its Slave Population in Olden Time," *The Bath Plaindealer*, January 24, 1885. For more information on Captain Helm and slavery in Bath, see *The Bath Plaindealer*, February 7 and 14, 1885.

4. Cited in Barbara S. Davis, *A History of the Black Community of Syracuse* (Syracuse, N.Y.: n.p., 1980), 5. See also, Barbara S. Davis, "The Black Community of Syracuse: A History," *Regional Conference of Historical Agencies*, 13 (February 1983): 1.

5. Timothy C. Cheney, *Reminiscences of Syracuse* (Syracuse: Onondaga Historical Association, 1914), 136.

6. Laurence E. Leamer, "Blacks in Vestal," unpublished manuscript by Vestal town historian, 1984, 1-2. Copy in Binghamton Public Library. Because of the small community of free blacks who eventually settled in the vicinity of Vestal, one road was known as African Road.

7.

Thomas P. Dimitroff, and Lois S. James, *History of the Corning-Painted Post Area: 200 Years in Painted-Post Country* (Corning, N.Y.: Corning Area Bicentennial Committee, 1977, 45.

8. Gretchen Sullivan Sorin, "The Black Community in Elmira," in *A Heritage Uncovered: The Black Experience in Upstate New York, 1800-1925*, ed. by Cara Sutherland (Elmira, N.Y.: Chemung County Historical Society, 1988), 8.

9. On the legal aspects of slavery and abolition in New York State, see Carl Nordstrom, "The New York Slave Code," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, Vol. 4 No. 1 (January 1980): 7-25; Edgar J. McManus, *A History of Negro Slavery in New York* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1966), Chapters V, VIII, and IX; and Arthur Zilversmit, *The First Emancipation: The Abolition of Slavery in the North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

10. Steward, *Twenty-Two Years*, 113. For more on Steward and slavery in Steuben County, see Helene C. Phelan, *And Why Not Every Man?: An Account of Slavery, the Underground Railroad, and the Road to Freedom in New York State's Southern Tier* (Interlaken, N.Y.; Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1987), 25-34.

11. Peter Wheeler, *Chains and Freedom; or, The Life and Adventures of Peter Wheeler, a Colored Man Yet Living, a Slave in Chains, a Sailor on the Deep, and a Sinner at the Cross* (New York: E.S. Arnold and Co., 1839). See also, Sydney H. Gallwey, *Early Slaves and Freeman of Tompkins County* (Ithaca, n.p., 1962), 3-5.

12. Cited in Sydney H. Gallwey, *Peter Webb: Slave-Freeman-Citizen of Tompkins County, New York* (Ithaca, N.Y.: DeWitt Historical Society, 1960), p. 3. See also, Tendai Mutunhu, "Peter Webb of Tompkins County, Central New York," *Negro History Bulletin*, 45 (January-February-March 1982): 48-49. For information on other early blacks in Tompkins County in the 1820s, see Carol Kammen, *The Peopling of Tompkins County: A Social History* (Interlaken, N.Y.: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1985), 107-108.

13. *Ithaca Chronicle*, July 11, 1827, as quoted by Field Horne, "Ithaca's Black Community," in *A Heritage Uncovered*, 19.

14. Steward, *Twenty-two Years*, 163.

15. Judith Wellman, ed., *Landmarks of Oswego County* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1988), 200-201.

16. Steward, *Twenty-two years*, 167.

17. Leo H. Hirsch, Jr., "The Negro and New York, 1783 to 1865," *Journal of Negro History*, XVI (October 1931), 417-426. Also, Phyllis F. Field, *Politics of Race in New York: The Struggle for Black Suffrage in the Civil War Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), Chapter One.

18. Steward, *Twenty-two Years*, 114.

19. Carleton Mabee, "A List of the First Black Schools in Each Place in New York State, from Colonial Times to 1945," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 2 (July 1978), 9-14. For a fuller discussion of the early religious and charity schools for blacks, see Mabee, *Black Education in New York State: From Colonial to Modern Times* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1979), Chapter 2.

20. Ralph V. Harlow, *Gerrit Smith: Philanthropist and Reformer* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 60-63.

21. Letter, Tudor E. Grant to Gerrit Smith, October 21, 1836, Smith Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

22. Steward, *Twenty-two Years*, 168-70.

23. Vincent V. Harlow, *History of St. James A.M.E. Zion Church* (Ithaca, N.Y.: St. James A.M.E.Zion Church, 1986). For more on Thomas James, see Shirley Cox Husted, *Sweet Gift of Freedom* (Rochester: County of Monroe, 1986), 5.

24. Adell M. Banks, "From small beginnings black churches grow," *Saturday Press* (Binghamton), February 2, 1985. John H. Frolich, "A History of Negroes in Geneva, New York: 1790-1860," (1960), typescript in Geneva Historical Society, Geneva, New York, p. 21. Ernest J. Bowden, "What the Churches have meant for Negro Progress in Syracuse," in *Highlights of Negro History in Syracuse, N.Y.* a pamphlet published by the Syracuse Inter-racial Group in the 1930s, copy in local history section, Onondaga County Public Library. "Zion Church to Move," *Herald Journal* (Syracuse), August 30, 1975.

25. Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1950), 226.

26. See John L. Meyers, "The Beginning of Anti-Slavery Agencies in New York State, 1833-1836," *New York History*, XLIII (April 1962): 149-181.

27. *Circular of the Executive Committee of the Whitestown and Oneida Institute Anti-Slavery Societies* (1833), Samuel May Anti-Slavery Collection, Olin Library, Cornell University.

28. [Jermain W. Loguen], *The Rev. J.W. Loguen, as a Slave and as a Freeman* (1859; Rpt. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1968), 358-359. See also, Esther C. Loucks, "The Anti-Slavery Movement in Syracuse from 1839-1851" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Syracuse University, 1934).

29. Catherine M. Hanchett, "Agitators for Black Equality and Emancipation: Cortland County, 1837-1855," in *From Many Roots: Immigrant and Ethnic Groups in the History of Cortland County*, ed. by Louis Varnaria (Cortland: Cortland County Historical Society, 1986), 88-89.

30. Milton C. Sernett, *Abolition's Axe: Beriah Green, Oneida Institute, and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), Chapters 2 and 3.

31. Cited in Sernett, *Abolition's Axe*, 27-28.

32. Cited in Sernett, *Abolition's Axe*, 51.

33. Cited in Milton C. Sernett, "First Honor: Oneida Institute's Role in the Fight against American Racism and Slavery," *New York History*, LXVI (April 1985), 1.

34. W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903, Rpt. New York: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1961), 158159.

35. W.E.B. DuBois, "Eulogium of Henry Highland Garnet, D.D.," in *Africa and America: Addresses and Discourses* (Springfield, Mass: Wiley and Co., 1891), 281.

36. Cited in Sernett, *Abolition's Axe*, 105.

37. On the intersecting reform careers of Smith and Green, see Milton Sernett, "Common Cause: The Antislavery Alliances of Gerrit Smith and Beriah Green." *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier*,

XXI (Fall 1986),55-76.

38. Cited in Howard Alexander Morrison, "Gentlemen of Proper Understanding: A Closer look At Utica's Anti-Abolitionist Mob," *New York History*, 62 (January 1981), 61. See also, Benjamin Savitsh, "The Well-Planned Riot of October 21, 1835: Utica's Answer to Abolitionism," *New York History*, 50 (July 1969): 251-263.

39. Octavius Brooks Frothingham, *Gerrit Smith: A Biography* (1878, Rpt. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 139.

40. Cited in Frothingham, *Gerrit Smith*, 140-41. Peterboro retained a number of black families long after the Civil War. Some of them had been fugitives who remained to work in the Smith household or on the Smith farm. See Peter Ernenwein, *The Borough of Peter* (Sherburne, New York: Heritage Place, 1970).

41. Ernest J. Bowden, "Gerrit Smith's Far-Flung Fame Here and Abroad Disclosed in Hughe Collection of Letters and Papers," *Post-Standard* (Syracuse), February 28, 1932.

42. For an insightful analysis of Smith's role in relationship to other Central New York abolitionists, see Lawrence J. Friedman, "The Gerrit Smith Circle: Abolitionism in the Burned-Over District," *Civil War History*, 26 (1980): 18-38.

43. *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, November 16, 1855.

44. The most accessible introduction to Frederick Douglass and his views is Michael Meyer, ed., *Frederick Douglass: The Narrative and Selected Writings* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1984).

45. See Charles H. Wesley, "The Participation of Negroes in Antislavery Political Parties," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIX (January 1944), 32-74; Charles Wesley, "The Negroes of New York in the Emancipation Movement," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIV (January 1969): 65-103, and Alan M. Kraut, "The Forgotten Reformers: A Profile of Third Party Abolitionists in Ante-Bellum New York," in *Anti-Slavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists*, ed. by Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 119-145.

46. *North Star*, July 28, 1848.

47. *Walker's Appeal, with a Brief Sketch of His Life, Also Garnet's Address to the Slaves of America* (New York: J.H. Tobit, 1848), 96. For more on Garnet see, Earl Ofari, *"Let Your Motto Be Resistance": The Life and Thought of Henry Highland Garnet* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), and Joel Schor,*Henry Highland Garnet: A Voice of Black Radicalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood, 1977).

48. Samuel Ringgold Ward, *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro* (1855, Rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1968), 85-86. See Ronald K. Burke, "The Anti-Slavery Activities of Samuel Ringgold Ward in New York State," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 2 (1978), 17-28.

49. Quoted in William Still, *The Underground Railroad* (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1872), 630. For more on Jones and the Underground Railroad in Elmira, see Tendai Mutunhu, "John W. Jones: Underground Railroad Station-Master," *Negro History Bulletin*, 41 (1978): 814-818; and Abner C. Wright, "Underground Railroad Activities in Elmira," *The Chemung County Historical Journal*, 14 (September 1968), 1755-58. See also, Gerald Smith, "The Liberty Line and Southern New York: The Underground Railroad in Broome, Tioga, and Chemung Counties," unpublished manuscript, 42 pp., in Binghamton Public Library.

50. Tendai Mutunhu, "Tompkins County: An Underground Railroad Transit in Central New York," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 3 (July 1979), 21. See also, Sidney Gallwey, *Underground Railroad in Tompkins County* (Ithaca: Dewitt Historical Society of Tompkins County, 1963).

51. Cited in Phelan, *AND WHY NOT EVERY MAN?*, 127.

52. Letter, Warren G. Olin to Milton Sernett, July 12, 1988. For examples of newspaper stories concerning suspected Underground Railroad stations or safehouses, see, Thomas Townsend and Jack Shay, "When They Spirited the Runaway Slaves into Broome and Tioga," *Sunday Press* (Binghamton), November 20, 1977; and Eric Anderson, "Owego Houses Have Railroad Romes," *Press & Sun-Bulletin* (Binghamton), January 3, 1988. For a popular account of the Underground Railroad in Central New York, see Arch Merrill, *The Underground, Freedom's Road and Other Upstate Tales* (New York: American Book-Stratford Press, 1963).

53. Melane Hirsch, "Along the Underground Railroad," *The Post-Standard, North Neighbors* (Syracuse), February 4, 1988.

54. Muriel G. Kappeler, "Tier Had Underground During Abolition Era," *Sunday Press* (Binghamton), July 26,1953. "Mecklenburg House has Aura of History," *Journal of the Schuyler County Historical Society*, V (April 1969): 27-28.

55. Monroe Fordham, "The Harriet Tubman Home and Museum, Auburn, New York," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 1 (January 1977): 105-111.

56. Biographical material is abundant on Harriet Tubman, though much of it is dependent on the work of Sarah Bradford, Harriet's close friend who wrote a biography in 1869 to raise money for Harriet's charitable causes. See Sarah Bradford, *Harriet Tubman: the Moses of Her People*, 2nd ed. (1886, rpt., Secaucus, N.J.: The Citadel Press, 1961); Earl Conrad, *Harriet Tubman* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1943); Frances T. Humphreyville, *Harriet Tubman: Flame of Freedom* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1967); Ann Petry, *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1955); and Dorothy Sterling, *Freedom Train: The Story of Harriet Tubman* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1954). The February 1981 issue of *Cobblestone*, a history magazine for young people, is devoted to the Underground Railroad and features information on Harriet Tubman.

57. Cited in Still, *Underground Railroad*, 296-297.

58. *Ibid.*, 297.

59. Charles L.Blockson, "The Underground Railroad," *National Geographic*, 186 (July 1984): 23. This is an excellent illustrated history of the Underground Railroad and could be the centerpiece of classroom instruction.

60. Bradford, *Harriet Tubman*, 117.

61. Cited in *Ibid.*, 107.

62. Glydon G. Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 64-67. Paul Finkelman, "The Protection of Black Rights in Seward's New York," *Civil War History*, XXXIV, 3 (September 1988): 211-234.

63. For Loguen's advertisement of his autobiography, see *Syracuse Daily Journal*, September 28, 1859.

64. *Colored American*, May 15, 1841. On Loguen's importance to abolitionism in Syracuse, see Milton C. Sernett, "'A Citizen of No Mean City'; Jermain W. Loguen and the Antislavery Reputation of Syracuse," *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier*, XXII (Fall 1987): 33-55.

65. Samuel J. May, *Some Recollections of Our Anti-Slavery Conflict* (Boston: Fields, Osgood, and Co., 1869.) On May's reform career, see Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease, "The Gentle Humanitarian: Samuel Joseph May," in *Bound with Them in Chains* (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1972), Chapter 12.

66. *Douglass' Monthly*, May 1859, cited in Sernett, "'No Mean City'," 48-49.

67. Cited in *The Post Standard* (Syracuse), November 28, 1857.

68. Stanley W. Campbell, *The Slave Catchers: Enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), Chapter 1.

69. [Loguen], *Loguen*, 364-71. Loucks, "Anti-Slavery Movement in Syracuse," 3-5.

70. W.H. Burleigh to Gerrit Smith, October 17, 1850, Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

71. [Loguen], *Loguen*, 394-395.

72. *Ibid.*, 391, 393-394.

73. Daniel Webster, *The Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1903), Vol. 13, p. 420.

74. Cited in in [Loguen], *Loguen*,409.

75. John O'Conner, "The Jerry Incident and Underground Railway," *Fifteenth Publication of the Oswego County Historical Society* (1952): 80. For additional information on abolitionism in Oswego County, see Frieda Schuelke, "Activities of the Underground Railroad in Oswego County," *Fourth Publication of the Oswego Historical Society* (1940): 1-14; Charles M. Snyder, "The Antislavery Movement in the Oswego Area," *Eighteenth Publication of the Oswego County Historical Society* (1955): 2-12; and Judith Wellman, "'Bound by Duty:' Abolitionists in Mexico, New York, 1830-1842," *Journal* of the Oswego County Historical Society (1973): 1-30. On the Ames house, see Wellman, ed., *Landmarks of Oswego County*, 258-259.

76. Published accounts of the "Jerry Rescue" by contemporaries include [Loguen], *Loguen*, 398-424; May, *Recollections*, 373-384; and Ward, *Autobiography*, 122-125. See also the *Daily Standard* (Syracuse), October 4 & 5, 1851. Secondary sources include: W. Freeman Galpin, "The Rescue," *New York History*, XXVI (January 1945), 19-34: Jayme Sokolow, "The Jerry McHenry Rescue and the Growth of Northern Anti-Slavery Sentiment during the 1850s," *Journal of American Studies*, 16 (December 1982): 427-445; and Earl E. Sperry, *The Jerry Rescue* (Syracuse: Onondaga Historical Association, 1924).

77. Kenneth R. Short, "New York Central College: A Baptist Experiment in Integrated Higher Education, 1841-61," *Foundations*, 5 (July 1962): 250-255; "Cortland County's First College Located in Village of McGraw," *Cortland Standard,*July 16, 1958. Central College' third black professor, George Boyer Vashon, is also worth noting. He graduated from Oberlin College, studied law in Pittsburgh, set up a practice in Syracuse in 1851, and joined the city's Vigilance Committee. Vashon taught at Central College from late 1853 to late 1857. See Catherine M. Hanchett, "George Boyer Vashon, 1824-1878: Black Educator, Poet, Fighter Fighter for Equal Rights," Part One, *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine,* 68 (July 1985): 205-219; and Hanchett, "George Boyer Vashon, 1828-1878: Black Educator, Poet, Fighter for Equal Rights," Part Two, *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine,* 68 (October 1985): 333-49.

78. Catherine M. Hanchett, "Fighters Against Prejudice: New York Central College and Its Three Black Professors, 1849-1857," May 1983) unpublished manuscript, 16 pp., copy in Cortland County Historical Society library, Cortland. Also, R.J.M. Blackett, "William G. Allen: The Forgotten Professor," *Civil War History*, XXXVI (March 1980): 38-52. For a fascinating profile of two black sisters who attended Central College, see Hanchett, "'What Sort of People & Families. . .': The Edmondson Sisters," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 6 (July 1982): 21-37.

79. "The Trial of Van Tuyl--His Conviction and Sentence," *Gazette* (Geneva), April 22, 1859. See also, Frolich, "History of Negroes in Geneva, New York," 37-40. The liberality of Geneva whites did not prevent blacks from having to live on a tract of land west of the village variously known as "New Africa" or "New Liberia." They remained in this area, in the vicinity of present day West Street and High Street, well into the 1900s. See C. David Brumberg, *The Making of an Upstate Community, Geneva, New York: 1750-1920* (Geneva, N.Y.: The Geneva Bicentennial Commission, 1976), 78.

80. Sernett, *Abolition's Axe*, Chapter 6; Eva Taylor, *A History of the Park Church* (Elmira: The Park Church, 1961); Harlow, *Gerrit Smith*, 198-208; and Loucks, "Anti-Slavery Movement in Syracuse," 16-17. For a general history of the impact of abolitionism on the churches, see John R. McKivigan, *The War Against Proslavery Religion, Abolition and the Northern Churches, 1830-65* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

81. Zita Dyson, "Gerrit Smith's Effort in Behalf of the Negroes in New York," *Journal of Negro History*, III (October 1918): 354-59. Frederick Douglass gave publicity to Smith's plan in his *North Star*, January 7, February 18, 1848; and January 5, March 2, and June 1, 1849. Also, Benjamin Quarles, *Allies for Freedom: Blacks and John Brown* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), Chapter V.

82. On the involvement of Loguen and Douglass with Brown, see Benjamin Quarles, ed., *Blacks on John Brown* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972) 6-10. For a detailed analysis of Smith's state of mind, see John S. McKivigan and Madeline Leveille, "The 'Black Dream' of Gerrit Smith, New York Abolitionist," *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier* XX (Fall 1985), 51-76. Also, Jeffery Rossbach, *Ambivalent Conspirators: John Brown, the Secret Six, and a Theory of Slave Violence* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 91-101.

83. Caroline Cowles Richards, *Village Life in America: 1852-1872* (Williamstown, Mass: Corner House Publishers, 1972), 130-131.

84. *Ibid.*, 131.

85. *Ibid.* 153.

86. Davis, *Black Community of Syracuse* (1980), 12. On blacks in the Civil War, see Dudley T. Cornish, *The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1966). Frederick Robinson of Chemung County recounts the story of five blacks who walked from the Elmira area to Boston to join the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, the first black regiment authorized by the War Department. See Ellen McTiermnan, "Our Melting Pot: Eight Minorities," in *Chemung County, 1890-1975* (Elmira: Chemung County Historical Society, Inc., 1976), 519.

87. Charles W. Barber, "Elmira as Civil War Depot and Prison Camp," *The Chemung Historical Journal*, 6 (September 1969): 753-756; and Thomas E. Byrne, "Elmira's Civil War Prison Camp: 1864-65," *The Chemung Historical Journal*, 10 (September 1964): 1298-1300. Mutunhu, "John W. Jones": 818.

88. Wright, "Underground Railroad Activities in Elmira," 1757-58.

89. Edmonia Highgate to George Whipple, January 18, 1864, in *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Dorothy Sterling (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), 294-295.

90. Letter, Loguen to Smith, April 27, 1865, Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

91. The inscription on the memorial marker reads, "She devoted the labors of her brief life to educating the freed slaves in the South, and her eloquence enlightened the North to their plight." Edmonia Highgate's story can be gleaned from her letters in Sterling, Ronald Butchart, *We Are Your Sisters*, 294-305. See also, "'We Best Can Instruct Our Own People': New York African Americans in the Freedmen's Schools, 1861-1875," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 12 (January 1988): 27-49.

92. Bob Bartee, "The Black Community in Syracuse, 1870-1910," unpublished research paper, Depart-

ment of History, Syracuse University, May 1970, 3.

93. Cited in Thomas E. Byrne, "A Grand Celebration of Voting Rights," *The Chemung Historical Journal*, 33 (June 1988): 3769.

94. See Ralph K. Andrist, ed. *The American Heritage History of the Confident Years* (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1969.

95. Hilda R. Watrous, *The Country Between the Lakes* (Interlaken, N.Y.: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1988), 43-44.

96. Cited in Davis, *Black Community of Syracuse* (1980), 17.

97. *Ibid.*, 15.

98. *Ibid.*, 17.

99. Sorin, "Black Community in Elmira," 12-16; Bartee, "Black Community in Syracuse," 4-5; and Horne, "Ithaca's Black Community," 22-23. See also, Charles T. Haley, "Afro-Americans in Upstate New York; 1890-1980: Critical Reflections of a Study in Progress, *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 9 (January 1985): 51-57.

100. *Watkins Express*, September 1885.

101. George Schuyler, *Black and Conservative* (New Rochell, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1966), 24-25, 28-29.

102. H. Edmund Bullis, "Blacks in Oswego Few in Number; They Have Remained Briefly," *Thirty-First Publication of the Oswego County Historical Society* (1970): 38-42.

103. Douglass M. Preston and Donald M. Ellis, "The Ethnic Dimension," in *The History of Oneida County* (Utica: Oneida County, 1977), 60.

104. Cited in Edward Nizalowski, "Margaret Williams and the Black Community of Owego, New York," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 10 (January 1986): 57.

105. Cited in Thomas E. Byrne, "Civil Rights in 1916; 'Birth of Nation' Protest," *The Chemung Historical Journal*, 14 (September 1968): 1759.

106. "Jobs Closed to Negroes, They Open Own Businesses," *Sunday Press* (Binghamton), April 8, 1951. For a general history of the migration, see Florette Henri, *Black Migration: Movement North, 1900-1920* (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1975).

107. Cited in Davis, *Black Community of Syracuse* (1980), 18.

108. "Colored Migration Brings Responsibilities to the Church," *The Post-Standard* (Syracuse), October 4, 1917.

109. Charles Haley, "The Klan in Their Midst: The Ku Klux Klan in Upstate New York Communities," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 7 (January 1983): 41-51.

110. Thomas McDonald, "History of Civil Rights Organizations in Broome County," *Bulletin of the Broome County Historical Society*, 19 (Summer 1972): 11-13.

111. Carolyne Stein, "Some Aspects of the Establishment, Management, and Program of the Cosmopolitan Community Center of Utica, New York," unpublished research paper, 1959, copy at Oneida County Historical Society, Utica, New York

112. Golden B. Darby, *The Negro in Syracuse* (Syracuse: Dunbar Center, 1947); Davis, *Black Community in Syracuse* (1980), 23-27.

113. Cited in Davis, *Black Community in Syracuse* (1980), 19. For more on Williams and Syracuse, see Gilbert H. Muller, *John A. Williams* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984), 4-9.

114. Charles S. Johnson, "MEMORANDUM on Visit to Syracuse, N.Y. and Interviews with Persons on the Conditions and Needs of the Negro Population," manuscript in Urban League Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., p. 3. The Manuscript is not dated but the date of Johnson's visit was October 27, 1927.

115. *Ibid.*, 10-11.

116. Darby, *Negro in Syracuse*, 26. See also, Theodore E. Brown, "Negro Community Relations in Syracuse, New York, as Related to the Social Service Program of Dunbar Center," unpublished M.A. thesis, Syracuse University, May 1943.

117. "NAACP Chapter Received by Syracuse Group," *Herald Journal* (Syracuse), April 24, 1946.

118. James J. Cummings, "The Black 369th in Oswego (1941)," *Journal* of Oswego County Historical Society (1972): 55-69.

119. "Welcome Colored Troops," *Evening Press* (Binghamton), June 4, 1942.

120. Arch Merrill, *Southern Tier* (1953; Rpt. Interlaken, N.Y.: Empire State Books, 1953), 158-59. Interstate migrant workers peaked at fifty thousand in 1949. For an analysis of the problems faced by black farmworkers in more recent years, see Patricia Du Pont, Carl H. Fever, and Jean Kost, "Black Migrant Farmworkers in New York State," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 12 (January 1988): 7-26.

121. Marie McCullough, "Handful of Blacks Struggle to Build a Sense of Community," *Evening Press* (Binghamton), February 29, 1980. See also, Pat Huber, "Yes, There is a Black Middle Class in Broome," *The Press & Sun-Bulletin* (Binghamton), April 17, 1977.

The African American Presence in the History of Western New York.

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Erie County

African American roots lie deep in early Erie County. In Buffalo, the first historical record we have of a black presence preceded white settlement. Colonel Thomas Proctor reported in 1791 that the only two non-Indians living there when he arrived were a white trader, Cornelius Winne, and his partner, a black man, Joseph Hodge. Hodge had lived there longer than Winne and in fact had lived among the Indians for a long time, "spoke their language fluently and had an Indian family."[1] Hodge, sometimes called "Black Joe," had escaped from slavery and taken refuge with the Seneca Indians. When the Senecas were forced to move from the Buffalo Creek area to the Cattaraugus Creek Reservation, Hodge had accompanied them.[2] Once the number of white settlers began to increase, Joseph Hodge was able to assist them by serving as an interpreter of the Seneca Indian language. Thus, one of the first African Americans in Erie County was actually a bridge between the Indian and white communities.

In 1828, Buffalo had sixty black residents and when the city was incorporated in 1832, the total African-American population was still close to that figure.[3] But this small size was not insignificant since a leadership group emerged out of it, and in any case, the numbers rose to 675 in 1850 and to 784 by the time of the Civil War. Buffalo had the distinction of being home to the largest concentration of African-Americans in Upstate New York.[4] Although they comprised less than one-half of one percent of the population of Upstate New York in 1850, the community-building propensities of blacks and their political activism gave them great stature. They built their churches, ventured into reform activism, spoke against school segregation and against economic and social discrimination.

The other townships in Erie County did not attract large numbers of black residents and in that regard were similar to the rural townships all over Western New York. For example, in 1850, Buffalo alone had a concentration of 675 black residents. Next in size was the town of Black Rock with 63, Tonawanda with 21, Hamburg and Brandt with 7 African American residents each, and the town of Boston with 3 black residents. Clearly, the focal point of institution building for blacks in Erie County would be in Buffalo.

In 1860, the trend away from residency in the townships outside of Buffalo was even more obvious. The census of that year showed 809 black persons in Buffalo. The township with the second largest African American population was Grand Island, with only 25 black residents. All other townships in Erie County had far fewer residents than this. The concentration of black residents in Buffalo explains why this survey of Erie County focuses on that city. That was where the black population lived.

During the 1830s, two African American religious denominations established churches in Buffalo. The Colored Methodist Society was organized in a frame house on Carroll Street. By 1837, the Methodist Society had become an official member of the African Methodist Episcopal denomination. By 1839, the group occupied a building on Vine Street, and the congregation became officially known as the Vine Street A.M.E. church. A black Baptist congregation was also founded in the early 1830s, about the same time as the Methodist Society. By 1836, the Baptist group occupied a church on Michigan Avenue. In time, the group became officially known as the Michigan Avenue Baptist Church.

These churches were not only spiritual centers, but they nourished the reform movements and served as the social centers for blacks in Buffalo and the rest of Erie County. They were the venues of reading and history clubs, and their ministers, deacons and female members of the missionary guilds and other auxiliaries, were respected molders of opinion in the African-American community.[5] The Reverend George Weir, Sr., for example, was the first regular (as distinct from itinerant) pastor to be sent to the Vine Street A.M.E. church. During his ten years there, he was active in the movement for equal rights for African Americans in the state of New York. He was of sufficient prominence to be selected as a delegate to the 1840 New York State Convention of Colored Citizens to discuss the political status of blacks in the state. In 1841, the Reverend Weir was named as chairman of a mass meeting held in Buffalo for the purpose of getting together a petition on behalf of equal voting rights. He also played a role in the temperance movement in Buffalo, and in 1842 was elected to the Board of Directors of the Union Total Abstinence Society of the City of Buffalo. The year 1848 saw the Reverend Weir organizing another mass meeting, this time to recognize the contributions of John Quincy Adams to the liberation of African Americans.[6] This caliber of leadership had its effect on the members of the church who, in turn, were also engaged in all kinds of reform activities in the three decades preceding the Civil War.

The Buffalo churches conformed to a pattern that had been well established in other Northern African American communities where the independent Afro-American church also made an appearance as an important community institution. The origins of the independent northern black church can be traced back to the 1780s when Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and James Forten walked away from the white (and increasingly inhospitable) St. George's Church in Philadelphia. Following their walkout, the Free African Society was founded. Out of that society evolved Bethel Church of Philadelphia and eventually the African Methodist Episcopal denomination. The black independent church movement spread to other states. By the advent of the Civil War, the A.M.E. Church was organized into seven conference districts with over 20,000 members.

Following a request from Buffalo, the New York A.M.E. Conference sent the Reverend Richard Williams, an itinerant minister, to organize A.M.E. bodies in Western New York. Within a year or so, Reverend Williams' efforts had resulted in a 31 person congregation and two local preachers in Buffalo, as well as congregations elsewhere in the region. When the Buffalo congregation was formally accepted into the New York A.M.E. conference, several other black Upstate congregations were also brought in. A congregation in Niagara, one in Lockport, and one in Rochester came into the Conference at the same time.[7]

The black churches became leaders in the moral reform movement of the ante-bellum period. They wanted their race to be elevated to the status of equal citizens of this republic and therefore set about cultivating the intellects of blacks, as well as their "honesty, punctuality, propriety of conduct... modesty...[and] dignity of deportment." The churches also encouraged the practice of industry and economy.[8] The reform efforts which would result from such activities were perfectly compatible with Christianity. The Church, its leaders, and the congregation, sponsored many "moral improvement programs."[9] Moreover, in taking part in reform activities, the Buffalo African Americans were part of the ante-bellum reform movement - a major national reform movement.

The City of Buffalo's first temperance society -- the Union Total Abstinence Society, was organized by blacks. African American women established the Young Ladies Literary Society of Buffalo to promote knowledge of important literary and scientific works, and this literary group established its own community library in 1841 - the Buffalo Library Association.[10] James M. Whitfield, a Buffalo poet and a barber by trade, as well as a member of the Library Association, explained in 1841 that prejudicial rejection from area libraries had spurred them to develop their own avenues to "intellectual cultivation and moral improvement."[11]

The church women directed a sabbath school and executed fundraising efforts, such as the 1850 North Star Literary Fair, to get new subscribers and raise money for Frederick Douglass' very important newspaper, *The North Star*. That paper was engaged in a campaign for freedom and equality of blacks and women with other citizens.

The community fought to overcome illiteracy under the leadership of the church. Sunday School classes taught reading so that their congregation might read the Scriptures. The Debating Society and the Young Ladies Literary Society, were committed to developing the reading skills as well as the broad knowledge base of its members.[12]

The church women who directed the Colored Female Dorcas Society of Buffalo, wanted to extend charity and benevolence to the needy in their midst so that the whole race might benefit from an improvement in the material condition of African Americans. The Dorcas Society was already established in 1837 when Robert Banks, a black businessman in Buffalo, made a speech stressing themes of charity and the pooling of black talent and resources for the good of all.[13]

Four other black residents of Buffalo stand out in this period of reform. First, George Weir, Jr., son of the Reverend George Weir, Sr., whose reform activities have already been cited. In a speech presented before the Colored Ladies Literary and Progressive Association of Buffalo in 1849, George Weir, Jr., encouraged his audience towards intra-group activities to elevate the race. The fact of his having been invited to speak, and the content of his speech, suggest that he was recognized as an important reformer in the Buffalo community.

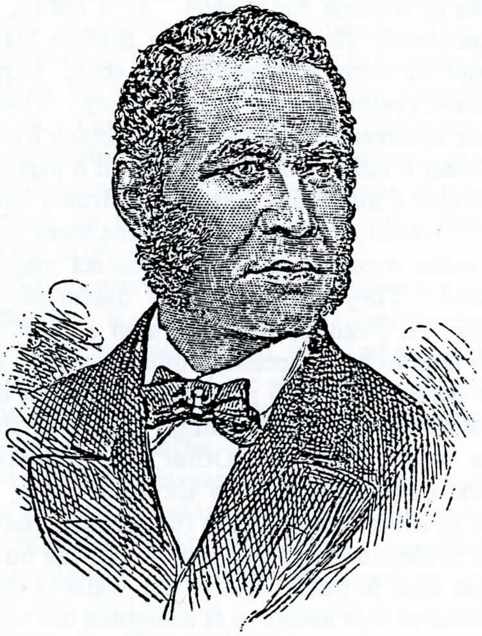
Second, was Abner H. Francis who operated a used clothing store and was also active as an abolitionist. Francis was an agent for two black newspapers, *The Colored American* and *The North Star*. He was a member of the Western New York Antislavery Society in the 1830s and 1840s; and in 1840 he was one of the organizers of the local Colored Convention whose duty it was to garner petitions for the cause of equal voting rights for blacks in New York State.

Third, was Samuel H. Davis, who was asked to present the keynote address at the National Convention of Free People of Color, held in Buffalo in 1843. Clearly, Davis' oratory was judged as outstanding since such great speakers as Frederick Douglass and Henry Highland Garnet were present and yet Sam Davis was the principal speaker. Davis did not disappoint his audience. In what must have been a stirring speech, equal to the occasion, Davis called on Northern blacks to take part in the great battle for "our enfranchisement, the benefits of education to our children, and all our rights in common with other citizens of this republic."[14]

The fourth reform activist, William Wells Brown, was also an historian and novelist. Brown lived in Buffalo from 1836 to the middle of the 1840s and served during that time as a lecturer for the Western New York Antislavery Society. Brown was known throughout Northern reform circles, and his novel *Clotel* was one of the earliest to be written by an African American author.

The Underground Railroad was extremely busy in Buffalo. The city is located just across the river from Canada where slavery was not recognized and where American fugitive slaves fled in large numbers. The Michigan Avenue Baptist, and the Vine Street A.M.E. church members passed on for generations within their families stories of this necessarily secret operation of assisting fugitives from slavery. A century later this activity became the one with which the black churches of Buffalo was most often linked historically. Monroe Fordham wrote in his history of Bethel A.M.E. Church of Buffalo that "the Black Rock section of Buffalo was one of the key points where fugitive slaves crossed into Canada."[15]

Education was another item on the agenda of all Northern blacks. In Buffalo, African American leaders expressed their opposition to the policy of racial segregation that was applied to the public schools. As early as 1842, blacks in Buffalo protested against the city policy which required their children to go vast distances past white schools to a single "colored" school designated for them and poorly taught by white teachers.[16]



Very truly your friend,
Wm. Wells Brown.

William Wells Brown

The segregated system of education was not modified until during the period of Reconstruction, but nonetheless, African Americans placed great emphasis on education since they saw it as a means whereby their children and the entire race might achieve an improvement in their status. Consequently, the Vine Street Colored School, according to the 1850 census data, had 150 children registered, over 90 percent of whom attended regularly. Their zeal for education led the Superintendent of Schools to say in his Report for 1850 that the parents and friends of the students in the Vine Street School were to be commended for their interest in the success of the school. The Superintendent stated that few other city schools were as worthy of his encomiums. Even the adults pursued education zealously and the result was a 62 percent literacy rate - a good record in the middle of the nineteenth century.[17]

Buffalo was the host city for the National Convention of Colored Citizens in 1843. The national conventions were held periodically (sometimes annually) during the 1830s to 1860s. Delegates from various states met to discuss and address common problems facing the race and worked to develop strategies for solving those problems. The selection of Buffalo as the Convention's site in 1843 was therefore a tribute to the Buffalo African American community for its efforts in the movement to uplift the race. The Buffalo Convention of 1843 was especially important historically, because the delegates had to grapple with the famous resolution which was proposed by Henry Highland Garnet. Garnet's resolution called for slaves in America to rise up and revolt. The resolution lost by a narrow margin to the position that nonviolence was the preferred stratagem. There is general agreement among historians that the Buffalo Convention was the most important one of the decade of the 1840s.[18]

Prejudice and discrimination limited the job options of African Americans. As a result, in 1850, approximately 75 percent of the Buffalo blacks could be found in such occupations as cook, barber, waiter, laborer, servant, and whitewasher. There also were some technical jobs listed among black Buffalonians - a printer, a tailor, a blacksmith, and a carpenter. There was also a nurse and one David Brown listed as a doctor. Overall, colored Buffalonians were to be found in 23 other occupations besides the six major ones mentioned. They provided many useful services, as did Abner H. Francis, who operated a clothing store and was held to be a successful businessman. An 1852 survey revealed that 35 persons owned real estate valued at $42,400 and the holdings of one of those persons was worth $12,000. Other jobs frequently held by black Buffalonians were those of sailor (8 percent), jobs in the building trades (6 percent), and in the crafts and professions (4.5 percent).[19] It was no easy feat for these men to push through the walls of discrimination to achieve this measure of economic net worth.

James D. Bilotta, in a perceptive analysis of Buffalo's black population of 1860, concluded that the overall socioeconomic status of the African American community of Buffalo improved between 1850 and 1860. Bilotta looked at residential spread and claimed that the greatest population concentration of blacks was in the 4th ward and that even there its size as a proportion of the white residents was so miniscule that a definite pattern of residential segregation is not identifiable in Buffalo. Compared with pockets of ghettos in such places as "Nigger Hill" in Boston, and "Little Africa" in Cincinnati, Bilotta believes this is a positive social index for Buffalo.[20]

A second measure of socioeconomic improvement on the eve of the Civil War was the education provision for blacks. Though segregated, Bilotta believes the school enabled black children to reduce the level of illiteracy. When he compares the literacy rate of Buffalo with other Northern cities, this translated into an advantage for Buffalo.

A third indicator was the increase in the number of family units. In 1850, there were 131 identifiable units. In 1860 there were 157, an increase of 20 percent. Bilotta concluded that:

> This increase seems indicative not only of a greater willingness on the part of free black Americans to set up families but, correspondingly, of a greater sense of security in society.[21]

A fourth index of greater socioeconomic stability among Buffalo blacks was the change (and expansion) of the occupational categories given for 1860 when compared with 1850. The 1860 list showed that blacks were then to be found in a wider variety of occupations and that even though most were still involved in service or laboring categories, there were fewer blacks in these categories than in 1850. Moreover, there was a dramatic growth in a new category - that of black seamen. "By 1860 the number of black sailors had increased by almost nine times that of 1850."[22]

A fifth measure of a changed socioeconomic status was the record of real and personal property. In 1850, Buffalo blacks owned $42,400 worth of real estate. By 1860, this figure had increased by 134 percent to $99,222. Other factors taken into account related to the increase in inter-racial unions. Bilotta ably demonstrated that "relative to free blacks in other urban centers, Buffalo blacks...seemed to be more stable and secure."[23]

Before the Civil War, Buffalo's African American families were, with few exceptions, headed by men; this was similar to the general Northern profile. Blacks lived largely in the 1st, 2nd, and 4th wards of the City along with many whites. Although it is fair to say that housing patterns were not yet segregated, there was a definite concentration of blacks in the Vine Street, Michigan Avenue area. As was the case with other localities that were situated on routes of the Underground Railroad, Erie County became the temporary, and sometimes permanent, home to a substantial number of fugitives from the slave states.[24]

When the Civil War ended, black Buffalonians expected a change in race relationships and an expansion of freedom. Never reluctant to question the status relationships between whites and blacks, their leaders now grew bolder after the war. It was not surprising then that African Americans in Buffalo became the first community to challenge the legality of segregated schools using a Reconstruction civil rights act.

In Buffalo, the number of black children of school age registered to attend school was under 100 throughout the Reconstruction years. Yet Buffalo, under its city charter approved by the state legislature, had a separate school for blacks. Black residents who owned taxable property in the city felt a sense of outrage that a separate school should be a continuing feature after the war. They believed it an unnecessary hardship for black children to leave the districts in which they lived to attend a single "colored" school set aside for them; moreover, they believed that the separate school violated the Civil Rights Act of 1866.

Aletha G. Dallas was the thirteen year old black girl whose parents sued John S. Fosdick, Superintendent of the Buffalo Public Schools, for the right of their daughter to attend the white public school. The briefs in the legal case were complicated, but the outcome was straightforward - John Fosdick was declared legally right in preventing Aletha Dallas from attending the school for white children. But the African-American community of Buffalo persisted in raising the level of sensitivity of the larger Buffalo community to the extent that in April, 1873, the city revised its charter and opened all the public schools to children of color.[25]

After the Civil War, the family and the church continued to form the center of black life in Buffalo, and it was a patriarchal family for whom very little changed in terms of their types of occupation, forms of social organization and status, until after the 1920s.

In the 1920s Buffalo was an important commercial center and it was becoming an established steel city. Its shipping lanes and railroad routes meant that it was a convergent point for both commodities and people; and the presence of Lackawanna Steel (established there in 1903) meant that other types of industrial activity also flocked to that city. These included chemical plants, the auto and airplane industries, fertilizer, petroleum products and rubber factories, ship building, printing and publishing. It was a city where families could hope to improve their economic status.

The first post-Civil War out-migration of blacks from the South began in the 1880s and was reflected in the 1890 federal census. In addition to states in the mid and southwest, blacks ventured to such areas as New York City and Chicago. The second wave of migrants came in the World War I and post-war era, and that wave has been labeled by historians, "The Great Migration." Buffalo got its share of those Southern migrants; so much so, that the African-American population which had numbered only 1,698 in 1900, and 1,773 in 1910, jumped to 4,511 in 1920 (a 154.4 percent increase), and to 13,563 in 1930 (a 200 percent increase). Two-thirds of these people had been born in the South, primarily in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia.

According to historian Ralph Watkins, the rapid influx of blacks from the Southern rural areas, introduced many changes in Buffalo. First, housing segregation developed as whole neighborhoods in the 6th and 7th wards became the principal residences of blacks. These areas were close to the Exchange Street Railway Station, the original arrival point of most migrants, and they were on the perimeter of the city's downtown business district, where employment was most often sought. The 6th and 7th wards had been vacated first by the German immigrants who passed them on to the Russian Jews, who then vacated them to the onrush of black migrants. The second major change then was that the black community spread to other wards, as for example, to the 2nd, 14th and 17th wards, since new areas were needed for the rapidly growing black population. The third major change was the separation of the interests of the black residents. This was most pronounced because of the differences in background and culture of the old Black Buffalonians in contrast to the new. The fourth change was in the emergence of new community leaders and the expansion of community institutions. The new migrants established their own leaders to sustain them in their search for jobs, housing, and an empathetic social network. The 1920s through the 1940s era witnessed the expansion in the numbers of churches serving black Buffalonians, and the appearance of new institutions such as the Urban League, the Colored YMCA, the NAACP, and the UNIA.

The migration wave put enormous pressure on all available housing. Wards 6 and 7, where 60 percent of the black population lived in 1925, also had some of the oldest housing in the entire City of Buffalo. Moreover, although the pressure for more living space resulted in some movement of blacks into other wards, the general tendency of the larger community was to make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for blacks to get housing outside the 6th and 7th wards. In addition, the mortgage market was effectively closed except to those blacks who could get a prominent white person to assist them in this endeavor. Consequently, African-Americans had little choice but to rent these aging and dilapidated structures which they did not own. But, despite these classic features of an emerging ghetto, black Buffalonians' most notable achievements in the post World War I era were the development of a vibrant African-American community, and the development of stable households.[26]

Ninety-three percent of the black families in Buffalo were headed by males in 1925. Lillian Williams indicated in her study that "stability characterized the family life of blacks in Buffalo in the early twentieth century." The households were largely nuclear, though many migrants shared houses with relatives or lived close by. Black families which had migrated from the South continued their tradition of informal adoption of children of poor friends and relatives and adoption of black orphans and helped the family to adapt to the urban experience.[27]

Blacks experimented in many formats for keeping their neighborhood viable. The new wave of black leadership brought from the South the philosophy of racial solidarity and self-help. Translated into operating principles, it meant that a black restaurateur would operate his supper club and hotel with black patrons in mind and with a primary notion to be of service to the black community by opening the establishment as a meeting place of social and cultural groups, and black artists.

Dan Montgomery was one example of such uplift-oriented businessmen. Robert Joplin, owner of the McAvoy Theatre, was another. The McAvoy opened its doors in 1921 to bring quality entertainment to the black community by attracting Broadway stars to Buffalo. Joplin also wanted to serve the black community by hiring "colored girl ushers, colored orchestra, and colored operators."[28] Self-help also meant the development of cooperative endeavors in the 1920s and 1930s - an idea which filtered across black America via the teachings and exhortations of followers of Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey.

One significant cooperative venture was a supermarket, launched in the summer of 1920 and continuing successfully throughout the decade. It began with a pooled capital of $10,000 and with plans to develop eventually into a chain of stores. Important early members of the coop were the Reverend Edward Nash, an ardent promoter of the self-help ideology, James A. Gant, and a housewife, Irene Allen. A second coop was the Buffalo Negro Realty Company (BNRC), officially incorporated on May 24, 1920, with the aim of alleviating the housing shortage which was such a serious problem for the new migrants to Buffalo. BNRC sold shares of stock at $100 per share and appeared to have had some record of success, for by 1922; its stockholders began receiving dividend checks at 6 percent.[29] A third African American cooperative, The Buffalo Cooperative Economic Society (BCES), was founded in the late 1920s by Dr. Ezekiel E. Nelson, a young physician who had grown up in the South and was a graduate of Wilberforce University and the Boston University School of Medicine. The society operated a grocery store in the heart of the African-American community. It also sponsored a weekly class which featured speakers and discussion groups on topics related to economic self-help. BCES survived until 1961.[30] All of the above cooperatives hired black residents in jobs which, because of discrimination, they found difficult to get in the outside community - jobs such as clerks, typists, and bookkeepers.[31]

The institutional props engineered for black self-help and racial uplift were the YMCA, the NAACP, and the Urban League. Lillian S. Williams has studied these organizations and she noted that the Michigan Avenue YMCA was seen as a "self-help organization."[32] She reported that blacks worked hard to establish the "Y", and with its inception in 1922, a period began in which the "Y" became the finest center available to blacks in Buffalo for community activities of a social, religious, or an educational nature.[33]

Those responsible for bringing the edifice into being were "race men" with the self-help ideology of Booker T. Washington. The architect was John Brent who had learned his craft at Tuskegee, the school established by Booker T. Washington. The director of the "Y" was William Jackson, who had been educated in segregated Southern schools and had taught in them as well. The Reverend J. Edward Nash and Cornelius Ford, prominent black Buffalonians, (both strong "Y" supporters) also received early socialization and education in Southern missionary schools; and Dr. Ivorite Scruggs, one of the leading lights of the YMCA venture, understood well the compromise which had to be made when blacks built a black institution while deeply abhorring the idea of segregation based on race. He explained the use of a segregated facility in this manner:

Dr. Ezekiel E. Nelson

> We must choose between fear of segregation on the one hand and on the other, racial progress; we must choose between developing the best within us in our institutions, built along the lines of other groups and a means of self-expression for us, or merely content ourselves with becoming a minor part of institutions fostered by other groups.
>
> ...This is the adjustment period. In the years to come we will have furnished a foundation upon which to develop a super structure of our own civilization. We must build so that the edifice will be strong and inspiring.[34]

The Michigan Avenue YMCA was indeed built upon a strong and sure foundation. Its programs included vocational education to prepare blacks for the jobs which were available to them, a lecture series featuring nationally known blacks (who provided inspiration and role models), and conferences on such themes as "Health and Hygiene," "Employment and Youth," and "Black Youth in Higher Education."[35]

The second post World War I institution was the Buffalo Urban League. The National Urban League had been formed a decade and a half earlier to assist blacks in solving social, economic, and urban problems which prevented racial progress in Northern cities. Buffalo's changing urban conditions were sufficiently alarming for a study to be commissioned on the status of the black population there. This was undertaken by

Charles S. Johnson of the National Urban League. His 1923 report was highly critical of trends in Buffalo where the employment profile, the recreation facilities, the education, the health and living conditions of blacks were concerned. Equality of opportunity, Johnson concluded in the Report, was not available to Buffalo's blacks. Lillian S. Williams confirms this in her study of Buffalo from 1900 to 1930.

The World War I economic boom had faded by 1930 and black men and women, especially women, found themselves out of work. The effects were noticed as early as 1925; but before this, Buffalo's black workers were to be found in jobs such as station firemen, furnacemen, chauffeurs, clergymen, music teachers and craftsmen; and as janitors, rolling-mills laborers, and domestic servants. When bad economic times came, even black female domestics found that a preference was expressed by employers for white domestics.[36]

As in the case of the YMCA, the men promoting the idea of the Urban League were Southern-born and Southern-educated. Most had experienced, first hand, the difficulties facing black migrants to the City of Buffalo. The leading supporters of the League were the Reverend Elijah Echols of the Shiloh Baptist Church, the Reverend Sydney O.B. Johnson, pastor of the Lloyd Memorial Congregational Church, and the Reverend J. Edward Nash of the Michigan Avenue Baptist Church. They were successful in getting their congregations to support the idea with their donations.

In 1927, a Buffalo Urban League was fully functioning with its own director, William Evans, born in Louisville, Kentucky, educated at Fisk University, and sufficiently experienced in Northern urban problems via his previous appointments with the Chicago Urban League.[37] Evans and his staff concentrated on improving conditions on Buffalo's East side through projects related to employment, health, criminal justice, family and welfare, housing, and education. The undergirding was self-help and the methods selected for attacking these problems seem very "modern" sixty years later.

For example, the Buffalo Urban League's Big Brothers program, established in 1928, provided positive role models for black adolescents, as well as recreational outlets, in an effort to prevent delinquency. Their conferences with police chiefs and precinct captains in black neighborhoods, and with the white police who patrolled black neighborhoods, were designed to build greater sensitivity to "Negro" concerns. And their meetings with the editors of newspapers were to elicit their help in securing unbiased reporting. William Evans was a frequent lecturer at nearby colleges. He promoted the suggestion that students prepare theses on African American themes.[38]

There was a limit to the success which the Urban League could achieve in neutralizing race hostility, but it succeeded in acquiring the reputation that it was on the side of improving conditions of black people in Buffalo and blacks gave it enthusiastic support and recognition as their change agent.[39]

The NAACP was another important twentieth century organization. The Buffalo branch followed the national lead by protesting the segregation of blacks in places of public accommodation and the images of them depicted in films.[40] Buffalo eventually placed its own stamp on the local NAACP by concentrating on problems faced by blacks in the birthplaces of the current wave of migrants, namely, those recently from the Southern states. This was a Southern strategy designed to win over the loyalty of those men and women who had only recently left the problems behind. Historian, Lillian Williams describes it in this way,

> By the 1920s, major concerns of the Buffalo NAACP were the system of southern peonage and the criminal justice system of the South which relegated blacks to extraordinarily long sentences or which allowed them to be lynched with impunity.

The NAACP, Williams said, also "stepped up its policy of prosecuting the owners of businesses that discriminated against blacks."[41] The latter effort, not only won over the loyalty of still more Southern migrants, but gained national recognition for the Buffalo branch. One such case involved a legal suit filed by the parents of Harold Robinson and William Jackson against George Zappas, proprietor of the Broadway Homemade Candy Parlor, who had refused to serve them ice cream on account of their race. The case went all the way up to the New York State Court of Appeals which affirmed all lower court rulings that Zappas had violated the youths' rights under the 1918 Civil Rights Act of New York State which said that:

> ...all persons within the jurisdiction of this State shall be entitled to full and equal accommodations, advantages and privileges of any place of public accommodation, resort or amusement.[42]

The court case was, according to Lillian Williams, "a triumph for the local NAACP."[43]

Buffalo's NAACP members were vigorous in their advocacy of Congressman Leonidas Dyer's anti-lynching bill which would have made lynching a federal offense in the 1920s had it passed. The Buffalo branch got pledges from their congressional representatives to support the bill. It also stirred up support for local politicians running for elections who had supported the bill; and it was responsible for the scores of telegrams and letters which went to members of the Judiciary Committee and to important senators in Congress. In addition to these efforts, the Buffalo

NAACP branch convinced Buffalo newspapers that they should give editorial support for the Dyer anti-lynching bill.[44] The Buffalo NAACP also handled the evidence against a white rapist of a black child in such a way that it received credit in national newspaper accounts of the deed. Lillian Williams' summary view of the NAACP leadership from 1915 to 1930 is particularly insightful. She says it was

> ...greatly influenced by its southern-born constituents, fought Jim Crow whenever it manifested itself, sought fair treatment for blacks through the legal system and petitioned Congress to pass legislation to protect the rights of blacks. The Association emphasized the need for self-help and racial solidarity. Its multifaceted approach fostered black pride and was instrumental in helping blacks to maintain a strong sense of community.[45]

It would be an unbalanced picture which depicted black Buffalonians as single-mindedly pursuing only serious racial self-interest. Adding balance to their lives and choices to their use of leisure time were the myriad recreation opportunities in which they could and did participate.

Black leaders in Buffalo were aware of the possible negative consequences of misused leisure time and so took up the challenge of directing the type of leisure time activities which would improve, not destroy, the quality of life for black Buffalonians. The churches served as venues for such activities as the Literary and Research Club, the Christian Culture Congress, the Phyllis Wheatley Club, the New Era Civic Club, the Unity Club, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, the Douglass Club, the Pullman Employees Social Club and Women's Clubs. Church work which supported the poor was considered worthy leisure time activity; and many used their spare time collecting clothes and distributing toys.

There were activities of a lighter sort which the churches were able to endorse, as, for example, music concerts, musical comedies, basketball tourneys and Sunday School picnics, while groups outside the church were interested as well in promoting plays. The Dumas Dramatic Club, and the Dunbar Pen and Pencil Club were all part of Buffalo's African American community in the 1920s. Also mentioned by Ralph Watkins in his history of that period were the Poro Happy Hour Club, the Pi Epsilon Theta Fraternity, the Beacon Light Lodge # 30, the Colored Chauffeurs Club, the Thrifty Club, the Whist Club, the Dames, the Mysterious Ten Club, the Imperial Ladies Sextet, the Octorara Social Club and many more. The social elite in black Buffalo were members of such clubs as the New Century, the Criterion, and the Appomattox. Members of the "social elite" clubs included Clara Payne, Dr. Clarence H. Patrick, James Ross, Rudolph Lane, Dr. M.A. Allen, Cornelius Ford, Mrs. Earl De Frank, and the Reverend Sydney O.B. Johnson. A bit further down the social scale was the president and foremost member of the Pullman Employees' Club, Richard Lacey.

Buffalo had its share of enthusiastic support for boxing, interest in baseball and in long distance running, especially when their own track star, Claude Moorehand, a distance walker, was a participant. Dancing (at the Weiss, Miller and the Crescent, privately owned meeting halls) and avid interest in both the automobile and the feats of the aviators of the day, were all part of the leisure time interests of African Americans in Buffalo. In addition to the above, professional entertainment in the theatres, in the music halls and in the vaudeville houses were popular pastimes among Buffalo blacks. Between 1920 and 1925, a high caliber of professional performers graced Buffalo's theatres. Charles Gilpin performed in "The Emperor Jones" in Buffalo; blues singer, Bessie Smith, made an appearance, as did the musical review, "Shuffle Along" by Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle. Roland Hayes, the internationally known American tenor and Jack Johnson, the world heavyweight champion also appeared on the Buffalo stage.[46]

But behind these pleasures ran a very serious note. Black migrant labor rushed northward from the South headed for an industrial North which was unprepared for it. Buffalo, for instance, had not wooed the Southern migrants and its industries were reluctant to hire them in large numbers. When white workers launched a strike in 1916, blacks were brought in to take their places and were kept on even after the strike. This, according to Lillian Williams, was the first large-scale entry of black workers into any Buffalo industrial plant. The example of hiring black workers caught on and the railroad companies and the steel mills followed suit.[47] The principal steel plants hiring black workers were Bethlehem Steel and Wickwire Steel mills.

African Americans had steady incomes and better wages than they could have commanded in jobs outside the steel industry, but they were generally put to work in the blast furnaces with its exceedingly high temperatures. Blacks, it was believed, were better suited than whites to work in the hot furnace room and at other "arduous tasks under the most deplorable of circumstances."[48]

By 1940, the black population of Buffalo had grown to approximately 19,000 persons. The signs of the times suggested that the path to good housing, better jobs, and better wages would be through the use of the political process. Like many other poor and working class Americans, black Buffalonians turned to the Democratic Party.

The Civil Rights agenda of the period 1954-1964 fitted Buffalo's needs of that decade. The Civil Rights legislation which emerged from the protests of those years addressed many of the issues that concerned Northern urban blacks - better jobs with no hiring discrimination, better schools on a racially integrated basis, better housing in any part of the city in which one could afford to live. The Civil Rights agenda also included voting rights. The underlying assumption, of course, was that blacks could use the voting process to achieve political power and hence force political representatives to institute necessary changes in the conditions of their lives. In Buffalo, the growing African-American population meant that they could field their own political candidates. They did. In 1966, Arthur O. Eve was elected to the New York State Assembly to represent the 141st Assembly District spanning Buffalo's northeast side where 75 percent of the residents were African-American. In his successful re-election bid, Eve defeated his Republican challenger by a margin of 10 to 1. On becoming Deputy Speaker of the Assembly, Buffalo's Arthur Eve became the highest ranking African American in the New York State Legislature.

Perhaps the most dramatic event in the history of the African American presence in Western New York, up to that time, occurred in 1977 when New York State Assemblyman Arthur O. Eve campaigned to become the first black mayor of Buffalo. Black voters came out in previously unheard of force. Sixty percent of the registered voters turned out to cast their ballots in the Democratic primary and they gave 98 percent of those votes to Arthur Eve. This made him the winner in the Democratic primary for the mayoralty. This primary victory showed Buffalo that the black community was a powerful political force. As Paul Carton put it, Eve's victory in the 1977 primary, "destroyed long standing myths about black voter impotence."[49]

The Eve campaign was not as successful in the general election for mayor. He lost in his bid to become Buffalo's first black mayor. However, even in losing he may have given Erie County's African-American population, and indeed the black population of Western New York, a glimpse of the final key to the doors of opportunity.

Monroe County

Monroe County has historically been an area in which the black families living outside of Rochester were relatively isolated. The 1830 census shows that there was only one black family living in Brockport, one in Sweden, one in Mendon, one in Perrinton, one in Rush and one in Gates. Two towns had two black families - Pittsford and Greece. Next was Penfield with five black families, and then Brighton with eleven black heads of household. By contrast, Rochester had 39 heads of household, all living either in the 1st ward (17 families) or the 3rd ward (22 families).

The pattern underwent no substantial change during the next twenty years. In the 1850 census, Rochester was listed as having 549 black residents, most of them living in the 3rd ward. Outside of Rochester, there were 34 black persons in Sweden in a population of 3,623 white persons; 37 in Webster in a population of 2,446 whites; 21 in Brighton in a population of 3,117 whites; 18 in Greece in a population of 4,219 whites; 7 in Clarkson in a population of 4,555; 8 in a Mendon population of 3,353 whites; 10 in 3,185 in Penfield; 5 in a population of 2,947 in Parma; 3 in 2,891 in Perrinton; and 3 in 2,061 in Pittsford.

In 1860, when the white population of Monroe County was 100,081, the black population was a scant 567 persons, 410 of them living in the City of Rochester. Sweden had 33, Webster 29, Greece 27, Brighton 15, and Chili 14 black residents. When this survey of historic Monroe County focuses on Rochester, then, it is because that was the locale of the institution building among the black population. That was where a black community emerged.

Rochester's African American population was between 300 and 500 during most of the nineteenth century, yet there was involvement in a range of group betterment endeavors. They were active in creating and sustaining a church, they were in the temperance movement, involved with the Underground Railroad and they aided in the rescue of fugitive slaves; they were part of the anti-colonization movement, they were involved with the Equal Rights Leagues, took part in the suffrage battles, and in Right to Work organizations. Their fight against segregation of Rochester's public schools in the ante-bellum years brought them recognition and admiration. Among their number were reputable business leaders, moral reform leaders, and a leading publisher. In fact, based in the Rochester African American community, there were branches of practically all the nineteenth century national organizations for people of African descent, from the Prince Hall Masons to the African Societies for Mutual Relief.

Living in the midst of this relatively small group of African Americans were bona fide freemen who chose to settle in the land of the Genesee River for the same reasons as did white settlers. They were choosing a new area just opening up for the opportunities and the challenge it afforded them. Asa Dunbar, the area's first black settler fell into this category when he arrived in 1795 and cleared the land in an area now identified as North Winton Road in Irondequoit. Another group consisted of fugitive slaves. The area's proximity to Canada, where slavery was outlawed, was an important reason for staying in this and other regions near the Great Lakes. As always, the frontier nature of this land promised anonymity, at least for a period, and security from recapture into slavery. Austin Steward was one of the early black settlers who typified this group. A third category was made up of slaves brought into the area by their owners before the institution was outlawed in New York State on July 4, 1827.

The Rochester Historical Society has credited Asa Dunbar with the distinction of being the first black settler in the Rochester area. He arrived in 1795 from Massachusetts with his family of six persons, cleared the land, made his home in Irondequoit Bay, raised fruit, and sold salt from a salt spring nearby. When another part of the new settlement seemed to offer better opportunities, Dunbar moved his family in 1797 to the newly formed section of Irondequoit Creek. He worked as the manager of a large store there and earned the respect of the citizens of the town for they selected him to serve as city attorney on one occasion. When the town failed to prosper, Dunbar and his family moved to Canada.[50]

The Asa Dunbar story is important because it puts him in the area with the earliest of settlers. In 1796, New York State had come to an agreement with Massachusetts over its conflicting claims of those lands in the Genesee Valley; and only in 1788 had Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham made their "clever purchase" of the 200,000 acres of land between Seneca Lake and the Genesee River - land which would later be opened up to settlement. As late as 1810, the area could still be described as a "wilderness" with some cleared spots and it was that year when the state began construction of a wooden bridge over the Genesee River, and Rochesterville, soon to be called Rochester, could assume the look of a boom town. The geographical areas of the new counties shifted as well. Several areas which are now parts of Monroe County (formed in 1821) were units in Ontario and Genesee Counties. Rochester, for example, was part of Genesee County until 1821.[51]

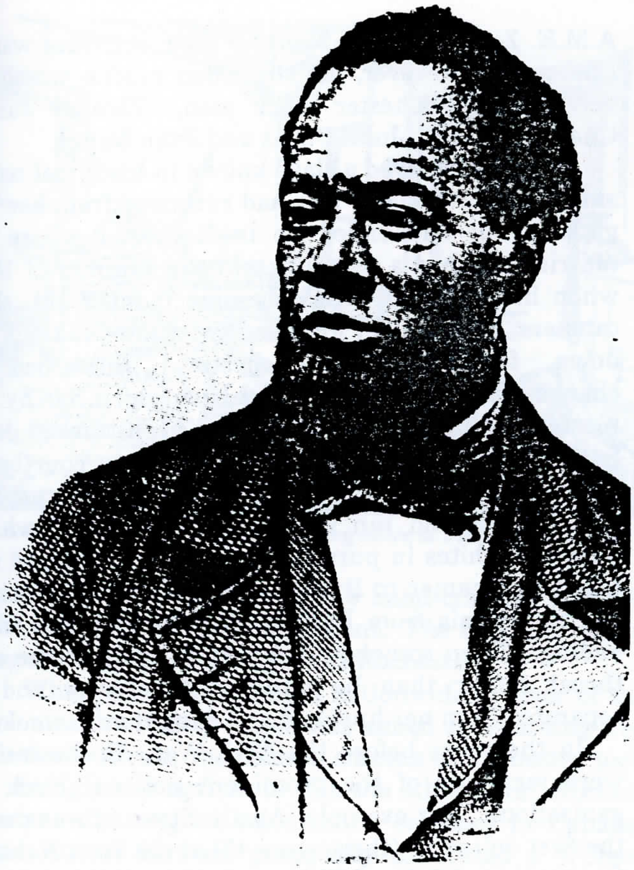
The years 1822 to 1834 were boom times for Rochester. The Erie Canal appeared in the spring of 1823 and Rochester shipped 10,000 barrels of flour to Albany and New York City. Its position on the banks of the Genesee River now would power the city's development. In 1826, the first issue of the *Daily Advertiser* appeared; the first public library opened and Rochester was divided into five wards. When the first grain elevator was built in 1828, the city was poised for a dramatic expansion. The town was attractive to laborers seeking work, digging the new Erie Canal, or clearing trees from the new streets, or working in the new flour mills that began to typify Rochesterville, or loading and unloading the ships bringing in their cargo.[52] Consequently, the white population grew very rapidly and the black population, though small by comparison, continued to seek out Rochester as a place where some unskilled work could be had.

In an unpublished paper on the history of blacks in Rochester, Muzette Castle examined the early census data and was able to identify the African American population. She pointed out that there were 11 slaves in a population of 1,075 in Ontario County in 1790; and 57 slaves in a population of 15,218 in 1800. She saw no record of slaves in Genesee County before the 1810 census and then that figure was 11 for Genesee and 212 for Ontario County out of a total population of 54,620. By the time of the 1830 census, however, there were some 219 slaves in the Town of Gates in Genesee County. They may have been brought there from the South for the particular task of clearing land as the New York State Emancipation Law had been passed in 1827. Apparently, these slaves did not remain in Gates for very long. The same census showed Monroe County as having no slaves, but a total of 475 black persons - many of whom had been declared free under the 1827 Law. By 1840, the black population in Monroe County had risen to 655; by 1850 to 699; and, just before the Civil War, when fugitive slaves were fleeing in large numbers to Canada, that figure dropped to 567.[53] When the era of economic expansion came in the 1820s and 1830s and brought increasing numbers of new settlers, they came to a society of free men and women.

Austin Steward was in 1816 one of the earliest residents of Rochester, having been impressed by the village's boom town opportunities when he passed through it in that very year. He had been on an errand to sell a load of produce in Hartland for a farmer, Otis Comstock.

Steward was born in 1793 in Prince William County, Virginia, to Robert and Susan Steward, but shifting ownership found him the slave of a Captain Helm of Bath, New York in 1809. Steward sought to challenge his owner's claim over him and he tried to get the help of the directors of the Manumission Society. He was told that since Captain Helm had hired out his services to others, that was sufficient to ensure his freedom under the laws of New York. One of the officers of the Society was Dennis Comstock whose brother, Otis Comstock, became Steward's first employer, then later, the supplier of produce for Steward's business in Rochester.

Steward walked away from bondage and settled in Rochester in 1816. There he entered the produce business, selling farm products like wheat, corn, oats, butter, cheese, meat and poultry. He next began to specialize in the meat market business. By 1818, he was



Austin Steward

ready to move into a two-story building built on land he bought for $500 at a site now marked with an historic marker. He lived on the second floor and expanded his store, which was on the first floor, to include general groceries.

Steward immediately began his life of public service. He assisted the village schoolmaster, Zenas Freeman, in teaching sabbath school for black youngsters. It was here that another famous Rochesterian, Thomas James, first learned to read and write. The records show Austin Steward representing his community as speaker at the celebration of the passage of the Emancipation Act of 1827. He was selected as Rochester's representative at the history-making First National Colored Convention, called in 1830 by the Reverend Richard Allen of Philadelphia. He was a member of the temperance movement and gave up the sale of alcoholic beverages in his store out of the sincerity of his convictions. He was a trustee of the A.M.E. Church, organized in October in 1837 in Rochester. Steward's home was a stop for fugitives on the Underground Railroad, and he was an agent for the abolitionist newspaper, *The Anti-Slavery Standard*. Steward was an ardent advocate of equal voting rights for African-Americans in New York State and presided over the 1840 Convention which dealt with equal suffrage and was held in Albany.

Steward was a bright and articulate man. He was certainly a sought-after orator whether for a celebration of West Indian Emancipation (as in the Canandaigua celebration of 1847), or that in New York in 1827 celebrating the Emancipation Act. His July 5, 1827 speech was praised by the *Rochester Daily Advertiser*. In later years, Steward's oratory was ranked in the same class as the speeches of Frederick Douglass although the latter gained more national fame than Steward.

Thomas James was another early settler in the County. His activities in Rochester made him a foundation builder of the city and the county. James was born in 1804, before New York passed its Emancipation Act. His family was owned by the Asa Kimball family in Canajoharie, Montgomery County. His mother, sister and brother were sold to a slave master at Amsterdam in the same County when James was only eight years old. He never saw them again, but a poem, written in his maturer years, on the sale of his family members, suggested that the incident was a deep-seated pain which he carried all his life.

Thomas James endured a series of trades and sales of his person; but most destructive to his manhood was the time his master traded him to a Cromwell Bartlett for a yoke of oxen. Within a few years of this particular exchange, James fled from bondage. First, he went to Youngstown, Niagara County, where he worked on the Welland Canal. He thought that by working in Canada where slavery was not legal, he would be considered a free person upon his return to the United States. This was an incorrect assumption, and when Thomas James took up residence in Rochester in 1819, he was technically a runaway slave. It would be eight more years before New York finally abolished the institution.

It was against the law for slaves to be taught to read and write; but the opportunity for learning was there in Rochester in a school run by Austin Steward - also a runaway slave. Thomas James learned enough to set up his own school in the small church which he built on Favor Street in Rochester in 1830. The denomination was A.M.E. Zion, and it was both a school, a religious center, and a refuge for other fugitives using the Underground Railroad to flee to Canada.

James, along with William Boss, organized an antislavery group, and sold the newsletter, *The Rights of Man*. James was also an anti-slavery lecturer who spoke to audiences in such towns as Perry, Warsaw, Syracuse, and Ithaca. Indeed, it was James who gave Frederick Douglass the idea of settling in Rochester when Douglass sought a community in which he could publish his newspaper, *The North Star*. James had

Thomas James

been instrumental before this in arranging a lecture tour for Douglass - one which brought him to Rochester.

During the Civil War, James went to the South to help care for homeless slaves living on a ten acre army campsite in Louisville, Kentucky. He wrote of that time, "Blessed be God that I have lived to see the liberation and the enfranchisement of the people of my color and blood."[54] James was a community builder and a public servant. His autobiography, written in 1887, four years before his death, was entitled, *The Wonderful, Eventful Life of Reverend Thomas James.* In his autobiography, he described that life of service for posterity.

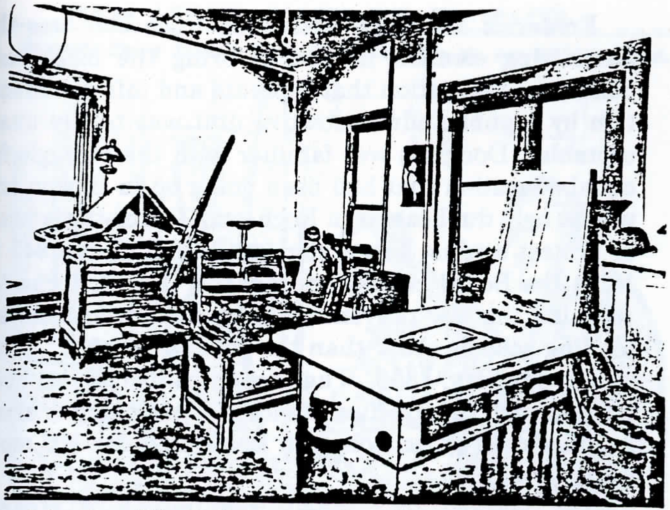
The ante-bellum history of the County is full of stories showing support for the fugitives from slavery. The Quaker community in Rochester, for example, was helpful in lending money, selling property and so forth to the black residents. In Brockport, Ahira Fitch, a Quaker, sold a parcel of land in the city to the blacks and they were thus able to build their African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Fitch helped fugitives in many ways. Isaac and Amy Post were also friends of the fugitives. It was, however, the Rochester Vigilance Committee, made up largely of African Americans, which was most active right down to the Civil War in protecting runaway slaves from recapture. A frequent hiding place was the basement of the A.M.E. Zion Church. None of their activities was as celebrated, however, as the Ellen rescue which involved four Rochester black men, Thomas James, Charles Dickson, John Burns and John Miner.

The case involved a slave known in historical record simply as Slave Ellen. She had run away from her Virginia owner and ended up in Rochester where she married and had a daughter. In the summer of 1823, when her daughter was only nine months old, slave catchers, hired by her former slave master to track her down, found Ellen in Rochester. Ellen had not changed her name, which had been given her by her master in Virginia; hence she had been tracked down fairly easily and was taken to the County courthouse before Judge Elisha Strong. Her four rescuers grabbed her and ran with her to Corn Hill with a crowd of whites in pursuit. She was re-captured and taken by steamer to Buffalo. The plan was to return her to Virginia from Buffalo. The story had a tragic ending. Ellen somehow got a knife and slit her own throat rather than be returned to slavery and be separated from her husband and daughter.[55]

In the years before the Civil War, Rochesterians were members of the prominent national black organizations. For example, Austin Steward was one of the first delegates (there were 40) at the First National Convention of Colored Citizens, held in Philadelphia in 1830. In 1853, Rochester was the site of the National Convention; this time there were 140 delegates in attendance. The delegates debated the issue of separate schools for blacks since it was a matter of grave concern to the local Rochester community. The Committee on Education recommended that separate schools be held for colored children but it was a view "warmly denounced and voted down by the larger body."[56]

The City was also active in abolition causes, equal rights causes, and in the temperance struggle. All the major humanitarians of the day went there at one time or another to visit and to speak. The Corinthian Hall became a famous place for visitors to these causes, as did the African Zion Church.

Rochester's blacks supported the abolitionist tracts and newspapers. Frederick Douglass' paper was founded here and Thomas James sold the biweekly paper, *The Rights of Man* in Monroe and the surrounding counties at great personal risk. He was mobbed, arrested, even subjected to a mock trial, just because he sold the paper. Austin Steward became an agent for the abolition newspaper, the *Antislavery Standard*, and he traveled around the country selling it. Douglass was even shrewd enough to get the Rochester *Daily Democrat* to print his paper in their

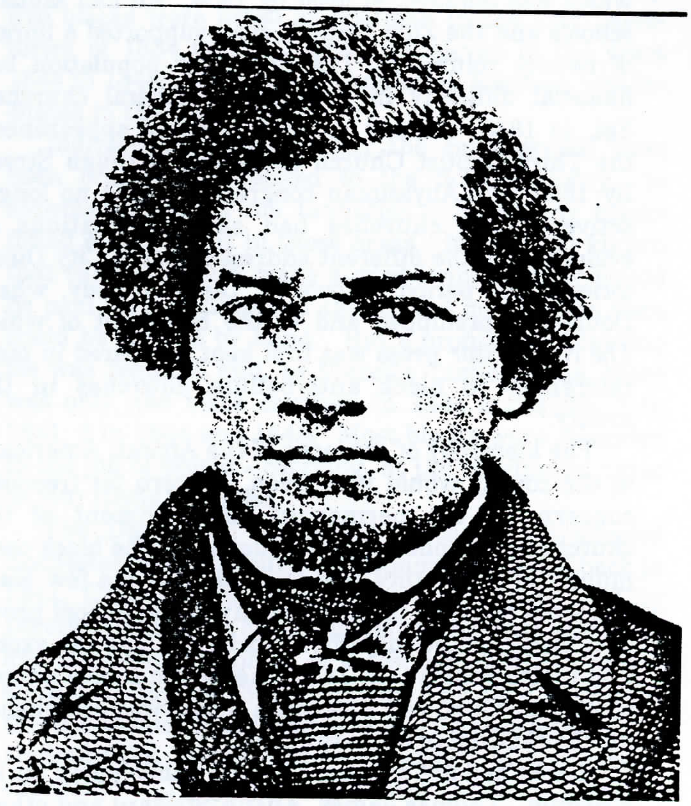


A drawing of the Rochester printing office of Frederick Douglass

basement instead of using the hand-cranked press in the damp A.M.E. Zion basement. *The Liberator* was a regular feature in the 1830s in Rochester.

When voices were raised nationwide in favor of the colonization society which was aimed at returning free blacks to Africa, the colored citizens of Rochester took a strong stand against it. On the other hand, Rochesterians did support colonization schemes in Canada, and Austin Steward personally conducted a Wilberforce colonization venture there. When the subject of colonization reappeared in the 1850s, a meeting of the colored citizens of Rochester in 1852 reaffirmed that it was the right and duty of every colored American to remain in this country. They stated that "any man who lends his hand to the colonization scheme is a traitor, to be compared to Benedict Arnold and Judas Iscariot."[57] Frederick Douglass, the leading black spokesman in Rochester, took a stand against colonization though he also modified his position in 1861, just before the Civil War, to suggest that colonization in Haiti might not be a bad idea.[58]

Celebrations of the idea of freedom energized Rochester from time to time. The event most often celebrated was the West Indian Emancipation celebrations. Rochester in 1848, Lockport in 1854, and Niagara Falls in 1858 were scenes of emancipation galas. John R. McKivigan and Jason H. Silverman described these fetes as being sometimes simple and sometimes lavish. Certainly they "were regional in scale and well advertised and organized." Over 4,000 attended the meeting in Rochester to listen to the great speakers of the age - Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet, Charges Lenox Remond, and Samuel Ringgold Ward. They excoriated the United States for not living up to the promise of the Revolution and for "trampling in the dust the principles of the Declaration of Independence."[59]



Frederick Douglass

The large gatherings which assembled represented the coming together of scattered free black communities and this gave them a sense of strength, of solidarity, of community, and of purpose, since Rochester's own black population was only 500 persons. In his autobiography, *Twenty-two Years a Slave and Forty Years a Freeman*, Austin Steward said that these celebrations had important solidarity-giving effects. Frederick Douglass said of the 1848 function in Rochester that free blacks were energized into becoming doers instead of spectators. In short, they strengthened the collective will to transform their situation. McKivigan and Silverman put it this way, they said these celebrations reinforced "cultural unity, group solidarity, and mutual aid."[60]

The church was at the center of black life and was the first permanent institution established among the black residents in Monroe County. The social and political activities of the free black population were usually directed by the leaders of the churches. According to Musette Castle, the first church for free black Rochesterians was the African Methodist Episcopal Church on Ely Street. She identified this church from statements made by Thomas James in his autobiography. James had claimed that he worshipped there in 1823. There were other black church bodies. There was the A.M.E. Zion congregation which James helped establish and which was definitely in existence in 1830. This was first built on Favor Street. There was also an Abyssinian Baptist Church which was founded, at least by 1834. All had sabbath schools and the Zion Church even supported a library of twenty volumes. The Rochester population had financial difficulty in maintaining several churches. Yet, in 1845, another church made its appearance - the Third Baptist Church on South Fitzhugh Street. By 1850, the Abyssinian congregation was no longer active. The churches had shifting locations as evidenced by the different addresses in the City Directories of the period. However, the Zion body, where Douglass worshipped and in the basement of which *The North Star* press was first kept, appeared in most references to black ante-bellum churches in the county.[61]

The hierarchy of concerns of the African Americans in the county would have been, concern for freedom, concern for the permanent establishment of the churches, and concern over education. The black community in the county was so small that the few black residents could be included in any public school provision made for the majority. Rochester was the exception in the county. In 1830, the public school system came into being, but a separate school was established for the children of black residents.

Blacks had not depended on the public purse for instruction. Thomas James, Austin Steward and others had privately taught black children and adults to read and write, and the churches had all pursued this function as well. But in 1830, when the City formally established a system of public schools, black residents were divided as to how their own best interests would be served. Would it be through a separate system of schooling, or by integrated education?

Musette Castle has provided considerable detail with regard to the development of a segregation policy. Black parents had actually petitioned for such a separation in 1832 and the Commissioners had conceded by starting a separate school for blacks on Sophia Street. Apparently, the black parents had to provide additional funds to support the school, and two years after its inception, it closed for lack of funds. At least one black man was unhappy about paying taxes when his community was not provided with a school and he petitioned the Rochester Common Council to relieve him of the burden of taxation.[62]

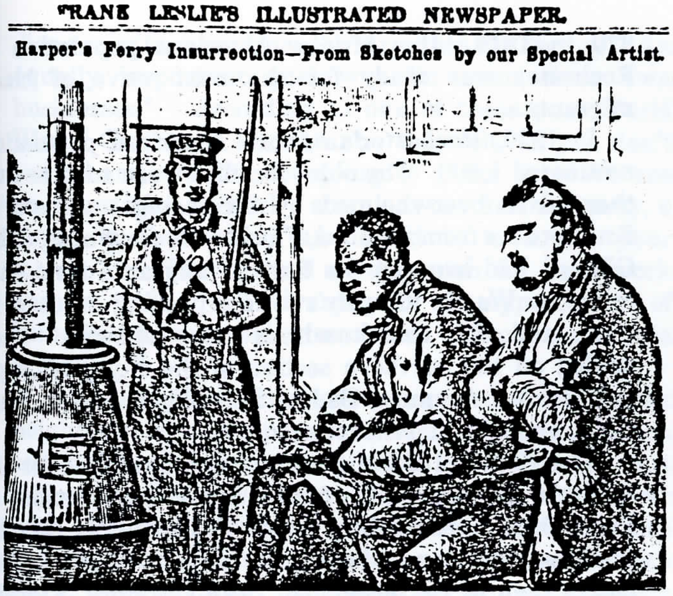
New decisions were made about re-establishing the school for black children in rented facilities on Spring Alley. An ordinance of 1845 adopted by the Board of Education said that black children could only attend the school set aside for them and no other. There were several relocations of the school and continuing difficulty in finding teachers. The buildings usually selected were "poorly lighted, poorly heated, and poorly furnished."[63]

Frederick Douglass' arrival in Rochester was the electrifying element needed to bring the black residents to a realization that separate and inferior education by a public administrative unit was totally unacceptable. Douglass was familiar with the struggle for equal education that had been going on in Boston and was to help duplicate it in Rochester. After three years of protest against segregated schooling, from 1847 to 1850, the Board of Education of the City of Rochester repealed the law preventing black children from attending schools other than the colored school.[64] This was in January, 1850. The theoretical battle had been won, though the practical difficulties of closing or keeping the colored school open continued for six more years.

The politicizing of the urban blacks of Monroe County was not difficult. White men could vote but free black men had to have property worth $250. The effect of this was to prevent large numbers of blacks from voting. Yet so many matters which affected their lives seemed to have origins in law and politics. Blacks across the state felt that they had to get the ear of the legislators, they had to convince voters of New York State to institute changes, and they needed access to the vote themselves.

The Colored Convention which met in Rochester in August of 1843, discussed the subject of suffrage rights for black citizens. Douglass himself became a prominent speaker on Equal Rights platforms in the company of such Women's Rights advocates as Susan B. Anthony and Mrs. Lucretia Mott. African-Americans organized suffrage meetings in Monroe County each time there was to be a referendum on black suffrage. Castle described the efforts of Rochester blacks, David H. Ray and Ralph Francis (barbers) and of Frederick Douglass and Charles Lenox Remond, to organize a suffrage meeting in 1843 in Monroe Hall, Rochester.[65] In the entire County of Monroe there were only 35 black voters, 20 in Rochester and 15 in the other towns.

During the 1860s when New York blacks created special franchise groups to fight for suffrage and placed suffrage committees in nearly every city and town in the state, Rochester's blacks kept their group active. Douglass and Thomas James spent long hours at the polling places trying to get people to vote for suffrage. Perhaps the work of the suffrage committees paid off, for after negative votes in the 1846 and 1860 referenda, Monroe County voted *for* equal suffrage for blacks in 1869 by a vote of 6,748 for and 6,327 against. It could, of course, also be concluded that the suffrage vote of 1869 came on the eve of the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution which would


FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER.

Harper's Ferry Insurrection—From Sketches by our Special Artist.

Sheilds Green (center), of Rochester, was a member of John Brown's group that attacked Harper's Ferry.

have given the vote to black citizens anyway. Most informed citizens may simply have voted yes to what was already a fait accompli.

In 1844, fourteen black Rochesterians of working class occupations demonstrated their political interest by publishing, in the *Rochester Daily Democrat*, their intention to vote for Henry Clay for President. The names attached to this publication were those of Ralph Francis, barber; A.D. Williams, porter; Charles Joiner, clothes scourer; Harrison Powell, laborer; Abraham Dorsey, a cook on a packet boat; George Francis, laborer; Charles Graham, laborer; John H. Lee, barber; Isaac Gibbs and Jeremiah E. Davis, car men; James Cleggett; Thomas Jordan and Richard Williams, laborers; and Joseph Jackson, a domestic. J.P. Morris, James Sharp and Ralph Francis (already well known for taking controversial public positions) discussed issues with a candidate for the state legislature in 1848. The men wanted to know candidate L. Ward Smith's views on slavery and the extension of slavery. What is impressive was that these men plied humble trades, yet they were bold in their advocacy of their race.[66]

The lesson to be learned was that political activism preceded the ability to participate in the governmental function. That was the poignant message of the fourteen working class petitioners, and it was the message of the era.

The promise of Rochester as a place where a black family could gain steady employment was not fulfilled in the early years of the development of the city and the county. The canal offered opportunities to immigrants, especially the Irish, but African Americans rarely got the preferred jobs - the ones directly associated with canal traffic. For example, occupations such as boatman and mule driver were directly connected with the business activity on the canal, but only five blacks were listed as boatmen in the City Directories of 1834 to 1841, and only eleven in the years 1844 to 1848. By 1848 only one black boatman was included in the Directory.[67]

Indirectly associated with the canal would have been occupations related to the flour industry, to shoemaking or to the tanneries. Not many blacks found employment in these areas. It was well known that cartmen could make a good living as they would be paid for handling and carting far more goods than could be carried by hand. But a prohibitive licensing fee was required and, as Musette Castle claims, there was only one black cartman in 1834 and 1838; 3 in 1841; 5 in 1844 and 1848. Most blacks were relegated to the job of porter - carrying, at the maximum, three or four items at a time.

The Depression and Panic of the 1830s affected Rochester blacks, though the economy bounced back in 1841. Castle shows, for example, that in 1834 the City Directory listed 72 blacks as being gainfully employed and cited the jobs of 58 of them; but in 1838 the list shrank to 58 and 18 respectively. By 1841, however, the list included 118 names and 101 occupations.[68] Undoubtedly, black jobs were largely in the service category. They were porters, waiters, cooks, dressmakers, and laborers. But they were also barbers, teachers, blacksmiths, white washers, clothes washers, cartmen, boatmen, and there was a mason, and a grocer - Austin Steward. They were not wealthy and they did protest discrimination which withheld the better jobs from them. However, the resolution of the problems of job discrimination would belong to another era.

In the years of Reconstruction, following the Civil War, black Rochesterians were still activist in their multifaceted struggle. Rochester had representatives at the New York Labor Convention summoned on August 24, 1870 in Syracuse to see how the job-bargaining position of skilled black workers could be improved and their status upgraded. Frederick Douglass was Rochester's representative. The meeting resolved to ask owners of factories and businesses of employment to hire blacks. That appeal was to no avail since even Thomas James' grandson could not work as a shoemaker in Rochester because he could not belong to the union. In fact, he set up a hidden building behind his home and did a far less lucrative business there than he otherwise might have done had he not had to do his job secretly from a backroom and for only a few friends who wouldn't report his activity.

By 1870, blacks realized that exclusion and segregation were problems nationwide and they began to blame their friends, the Republican politicians, for allowing this to develop. It is interesting to note that as early as October 21, 1870, a few Rochester blacks organized the Colored Branch of Tammany Society. Tammany was a pseudonym for the Democratic Party. On October 30, 1871, they formed a Colored Political Independent Association, pledged to vote for men and measures regardless of party. When the Republican politicians tried to whip up a demonstration supporting their own party, Rochester's blacks would not budge; only six attended out of a possible 600. Douglass was persuaded to run for public office in 1871 as he was nominated for the State Assembly for the Republican Party. He did not actively campaign, and lost by 1,200 votes. The Reverend Thomas James ran for City Health Inspector during the same year. He also lost. The time for black political candidates was not yet at hand either in the county or the city. But it would come when the black population was of sufficient size for their votes to count at the polls.

After Reconstruction, black migration increased in Rochester as a result of the interaction between Union officers and freedmen. The latter were told that there was farmwork to be had in Upstate New York. Frank Harmon, a Union army captain from Wheatland, is credited with encouraging the first significant post-Reconstruction wave. Harmon told newly freed slaves from Culpepper, Virginia, that they could get good wages on the farms in Wheatland. He even paid the cost of travel of some of the workers, who arrived on the farm of his brother Eugene Harmon. Soon, the "beaten path effect" inspired other blacks from that area to come to Caledonia, Mumford, Scottsville, Avon, and Leroy. Some of these migrants became successful owners of large farms and many of their descendants still live in Caledonia and Mumford. The Reverend Clayton A. Coles, father of historian Howard Coles, was one such post-Reconstruction settler who came to the Mumford area from Culpepper in 1888.

This new and distinct migrant group left its own mark on Rochester through the institutions it fostered. The Douglass Union League, for instance, named after Frederick Douglass, was formed at about this time and it became the central organizer of both the social and political activities of Rochester's black residents. The League was responsible for organizing, in 1888, the 25th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation with a parade and a picnic at Maple Grove. It also joined with that other social center - the A.M.E. Zion Church in 1883 in launching a protest meeting to address the subject of Southern lynching of their black brethren.[69] The father of Cab Calloway (The "Music-man" of the Harlem Renaissance) came with this wave of migrants. Cabel Calloway founded the Flower City Lodge of the i.b.p.o.e. or the Elks Club. The Lodge has continued to meet at the same place on Clarissa Street since 1906.[70] The post-Reconstruction black population, though vocal, was still small. Numbering only 879 in 1910, the African American population of Rochester was ready for the next wave of black migrants.

In 1920, Rochester's African American population numbered 1,500. The older families were soon to find themselves overwhelmed by increasing numbers of Southerners from Sanford, Florida. A crew boss, John Gibson, had brought the first 25 migrants from that town to Wayne County's celery-packing houses in 1931, and after that hundreds more followed. They settled on the northern section of the city on Joseph and Central Avenues, Baden, Leopold, Hanover, Harrison, and Ormond Streets.

The 1945 to 1965 migration was responsible for the modern-day growth of the black population of Rochester. According to a 1965 survey of the Rochester black population, 62 percent of the 33,000 blacks then in Rochester had ties to Sanford, Florida. This little town had been the source of most of the migration because family members encouraged others to come. Other Southern sources of the black population were, Greenville, South Carolina; New Iberia, Louisiana; and Culpepper, Virginia, which has already been mentioned.

Rochester's African American population rose dramatically after a century and a half of slow growth. In 1950, for example, there were 7,800 blacks in the city; in 1960, that figure was 25,400; and in 1970, 58,700. The 1980 census showed that blacks made up 62,332 of the population of 241,741 and it has been projected to be 89,000 by 1995, or from 34 percent to 49 percent of the Rochester population of that year.[71] After two centuries of residency, African Americans, on account of their numerical size, would be taken into account in the decision-making arenas.

In the 1950s, when the migration was having its first significant effect on the size of the population - when the big growth started - Rochester seemed to have "plenty of available jobs." One immigrant of that period told the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* that in those days, "I could quit a job today, and get another one tomorrow." Even the skill levels of the jobs he took improved. "Eighteen years ago," he said, Kodak hired him "to sweep floors" but he had moved up to become "a machine operator in Kodak Park."[72]

World War II accelerated the South to North migration of the African American population and this migration did not end after the War. Added to it, though, was the migration from the islands of the West Indies which came under an agreement between England and the United States that 80,000 workers would be admitted in order that they could work in the defense industries.

Rochester, an industrial city, received 2,500 of these Caribbean immigrants and that has become the base for a distinctive culture. The goal of these West Indians was "to move from the farm into the factory." An equally important goal was "to open their own businesses." According to one of these post World War II Caribbean immigrants, they felt, "If you don't work hard, you're not going to make it. We see transportation to work - a car - as the first necessity, a house is the second and third is to invest your money."[73] They gained a reputation for hard work and for taking "full advantage of the opportunity" of being in America. Many moved on to professional jobs at Kodak.[74]

These various migrations expanded the black neighborhood encompassing Joseph, Clinton, Hudson and Portland Avenues and North Street on the east side of the Genesee River. The west side of the river with Jefferson Avenue, West Main and Genesee Streets, South Plymouth Avenue, and parts of the 19th ward, filled up later. The latter section even became an area for upward mobility of the east side residents. Black barbers, clubs, civic and social groups (including the fraternities and sororities) professional groups (Kodak and Xerox engineers), the black owned radio station (WDKX), the churches, black newspapers (*Frederick Douglass Voice*), and magazines (*About Time* and *Communicade*), made networking possible. These forms of networking meant that the "black community" could be brought together in times of crisis no matter where individuals resided in the city or in the county.[75]

And yet, it will be the churches, the neighborhood associations, and the elected representatives that the historian will chronicle in the modern age. In the post World War II era, the number of churches grew to about 100 in the Rochester area. More importantly, the church remained the center of the activism, hosted political meetings and voter registration drives. Its members discussed social and educational issues and supported young blacks in their academic goals through exhortation and through scholarships to achievers.

The largest congregation is that of the Baptist denomination. Although the first three early Baptist Churches did not survive, there are some 32 today. The Mumford Second Baptist Church, incorporated in 1891 as the Belcoda Baptist Church of Mumford, has the distinction of being the oldest black Baptist Church in Monroe County. It was founded by the Reverend Clayton Coles. Mount Olivet Baptist is the oldest of the black Baptist Churches in the City of Rochester. It was founded in 1910 by an itinerant minister, Sadley E. Lee. The church grew large enough in 1923 for a splinter group to form a new congregation on the east side - Aenon Baptist Church.

Growth has continued by division. For example, the Zion Hill Baptist Church was started in 1882 after its pastor, the Reverend Samuel McCree, left the First Genesis Baptist Church. The local Baptist Churches achieved their greatest expansion during the migration of the 1950s and 1960s. The African Methodist Episcopal Church still has the distinction of having been here first, but it is the Black Pentecostals who are the newest and fastest growing group. Their rapid development came in the 1960s and 1970s.[76] Many of the pastors of Rochester area churches have been prominent in the neighborhood organizations which flowered following the riots of 1964.[77]

In 1964, riots occurred in Rochester's black neighborhoods as they were to occur elsewhere during the decade - in Watts, Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo and so many other inner cities with predominantly black populations. Analysts saw that year as a watershed in Rochester history and development because a new Rochester evolved out of the melee; economic conditions changed for significant numbers of educated blacks; political inclusion expanded to encompass both black voters and black elected officials, as the city took time off to reflect on the implications of the expansion which had begun since the 1950s and was still ongoing.

It was the demographic expansion which Lou Buttino and Mark Hare, in *The Remaking of a City: Rochester, New York, 1964-1984*, saw as the primary change agent. This wave of immigrants needed more jobs, more housing, better education than the city's businesses or schools were prepared to offer.[78]

The riots gave businessmen a reason for paying attention to African Americans. The Chamber of Commerce of Rochester reacted to the riots through its Industrial Management Council, which began to subscribe to certain civil rights goals like job training.[79] The major industries - Kodak, Xerox, Bausch and Lomb, Rochester Products - stepped up their hiring of blacks.

The riots spawned the development of the community action groups. Blacks began outlining their own agenda for progress. FIGHT was the most prominent self-empowered organization of blacks to emerge from the riots and it captured the media's attention as it demanded that Kodak step up its recruitment of black scientists and engineers and train blacks for the skilled jobs in Kodak's plants. The founder of FIGHT, Minister Franklin Florence, is still an activist community person. When FIGHT faded in the 1970s, other neighborhood associations gained prominence, namely, Action for a Better Community (ABC) led by James McCuller, and the Urban League under the innovative leadership of William Johnson. Other prominent neighborhood groups were the Montgomery Neighborhood Center headed by Moses Gilbert and the Baden Street Settlement headed by William Hall.

These neighborhood associations pressed for civil rights, for attention to the economic and educational improvement and to housing improvements for all the poor in Rochester, including Hispanics and the white and black poor.[80] The city's liberal whites approved the goals through support groups of their own. This neighborhood-directed activity provided votes for new politicians, now no longer as dependent as they once were on the ward system of the old-style politicians. In fact, the neighborhood movement supplanted the ward system and provided a base for new black politicians. This in turn changed the behavior of the traditional parties as they rivaled each other to include women and minority members in the fold.[81]

In the more recent historical period, the Urban League has been the major designer of reform directions as its researchers study "The State of the Black Population in Rochester," each year. They look at changes in the economic structure, education levels, housing, family life; and they monitor police brutality charges and urban decay. Other neighborhood centers like the Lewis Street Center and the Baden Street Settlement, are activist on behalf of social improvement.

The years after the riots witnessed as well the increase in the number of African Americans elected to public office in Monroe County. The size of the black population in select wards of the city, the emergence of the neighborhood associations as alternative political bases for the black politicians, the involvement of black church leaders in political issues, the wooing by the major parties of potential black vote-getters - all set the stage for the black electoral official.

Stanley J. Thomas was the first black to seek public office in Rochester following the Great Migration. In 1949 he had run for the Monroe County Board of Supervisors from the 3rd ward where there was a heavy concentration of black residents. He lost. In 1953, Howard Coles, the historian and publisher of *The Frederick Douglass Voice*, also ran, this time for the 7th ward, another traditionally black area which was then also filling up with new residents.[82] He lost. Electoral victory eventually came in 1961 through a black woman, Constance Mitchell, who ran in the 3rd ward on the Democratic ticket - but she had lost once before in a 1959 quest. Her supporters said that it was a "deliberate strategy to run a woman - someone who could speak out because she did not have to work to support a family."[83] Victory also came in the 7th ward in 1961 when black candidate Maxwell Walters was chosen to run for Supervisor there. In 1973, David Gantt ran for the 22nd District seat in the new County Legislature. He had "name recognition" because his mother had been a community activist. He won. In 1982 when Gantt ran for an Assembly seat (redistricting had placed Gantt's stronghold in the new 133rd Assembly District), he won.[84]

Other significant electoral victories were won by City Court Judge Reuben K. Davis to the State Supreme Court for the 7th Judicial District. The Supervising Judge of the Family Court has been Charles L. Willis. Ron Thomas, Monroe County Legislator served as the first black president of that body. Anthony D. Reed was also elected to the Monroe County Legislature. Ruth Scott won her seat on the Rochester City Council and was the first black person to become President of the Council. F. Glenn King was elected a member of the City Council as was Maxine Childress Brown. Archie Curry and Frank B. Willis have both served on the School Board.[85]

Blacks are no longer excluded from politics in the areas of the County where their numbers are greatest. They are a political element to be taken into consideration as their numbers continue to grow.

Unlike their political participation profile, education of blacks in Rochester has not been a cause for optimism. In the 1960s and early 1970s, blacks demanded desegregation and pushed for inclusion of African Americans on the Board of Education. They now have that representation. However, whites left the city for the suburbs under the threat of desegregation. They also left to follow the jobs which had moved into the suburban areas of the county. By the 1980s, minorities (Blacks, Hispanics, Orientals, and American Indians) made up 65.55 percent of the District's students. Racial balance could no longer be a boldly proclaimed goal. Moreover, low academic performance became the main matter of concern. The selection of the first black Superintendent made no dent on the falling performance levels, but the Urban League along with community persons, business representatives and the media, devised strategies to help students learn. They set up neighborhood tutoring centers, instituted a program of job internships, and placed television ads exhorting students to stay in school. A new Superintendent introduced school reform based on teacher accountability for student performance.

The history of Rochester's African American community began with an agenda listing work, school, church, and community involvement in social issues of the day. It continues on with the same agenda. What is different now is the size of the black population.

Genesee County

Genesee County was established in 1802 by the State Legislature and was then to include the lands "west of the Genesee River." Over the years, the original geographical area came to be divided into other counties and even the original townships came to be subdivided into more administratively manageable counties and towns. In 1821, seven towns in Genesee County were merged with seven in Ontario County to form Monroe County. In the same period, four other towns of Genesee were added to several in Ontario county to form Livingston County. Three years later, on November 12, 1824, an act of the Legislature took seven more towns in the northern part of Genesee County and these became Orleans County. Finally, on May 19, 1841, the southern part of Genesee County became Wyoming County.[86]

A history of black residents in Genesee County then could be misleading if it deals with geographical areas which later became Monroe, Livingston, Orleans, or Wyoming Counties. For some counties, slight geographical rearrangements might not change the large picture; but for the changing areas called "Genesee County," the picture would be distorted. On the other hand, 1841; the date when Genesee County achieved its present size and present boundaries, is too late a date to begin the historical survey we contemplate. A compromise then is to begin at the period of the 1830 census, a little before the final rearrangement of boundaries, but six years after the second to last boundary change was instituted.

In the opening years of the nineteenth century, Genesee County was densely forested. The first task of the early settlers then was to clear the woods in order to establish roads. The job was made much easier because they had the assistance of the Seneca Indians and followed the pattern of many established Indian trails. Today's state route 19 was laid down in these early years, as was the present day Buffalo Road (State route 33). The latter road provided access to Batavia, the location of the Land Office where the paperwork connected with mortgages and sales was done. Route 19 connected the then important towns of Hamlin, Brockport, Bergen and Leroy.[87]

The decade of the 1820s gave importance to these roads and to these connecting towns. The towns were stopping points on the stage coach lines. When the canal era came in the later part of the 1820s and the early part of the 1830s, much of the transit business went to the canal and this took away business from the toll roads. But the canal made marketing easier for the growing numbers of settlers and the population of Genesee County began to grow. "By 1837, when the first train of cars drawn by a locomotive engine arrived in Bergen," there was no doubt that this area of the Genesee was on the "take off stage" of economic growth.[88]

However, before the railroad came, the area was a busy one for the stage coach. The routes ran in all directions and there were many taverns in between to accommodate the stage coach passengers. Mary McCulley pointed out in her *History of Genesee County*, that there were nine taverns between Brockport and LeRoy and six between Bergen and Rochester.[89] But transit passengers were never good news for African American fugitives in the area and this may partly explain why this area of the Genesee, with all its fertile land did not become a popular choice for African Americans.

The 1830 census listed 24 free colored persons in the Town of Leicester in Genesee County in a population totaling 1,330 persons. The free persons included the William Thompson family. Thompson lived with his wife and two children, a boy and a girl. Several other free colored persons resided with white families and are presumed to have been in service with those families.[90] The census also listed 18 free persons for the Town of Gates. This was far less than the number of slaves listed for Gates and at a time when the Emancipation Act was already three years old in New York State.

Gates' free colored residents included Burrile Reid who had a family of six persons, a wife and four children. Reid had lived in that location since the 1820 census because he was included in the census of that year. David Shelden was another free colored resident who lived in Gates with his wife and daughter; and there was Samson Wood who was a resident in 1820 but appears to have moved elsewhere by the time of the 1830 census.

But this part of Genesee County could not have been well-liked by African Americans because there were too many of their kind legally held in bondage there as late as 1830. Gates alone had 227 slaves against only 18 free persons recorded in the 1830 census. Genesee County had 233 slaves in 1830, most in the Town of Gates. By the time of the 1840 census, there were no more slaves listed for the County of Genesee and there were only 16 black persons in the entire county. Three townships had no black residents at all - Byron, Castile and Bergen. Covington had 3, LeRoy 4, and Perry 9. In 1840, the white population numbered approximately 16,400.

After the forest had been cleared in the early years of the nineteenth century, there was no doubt that settlers were coming to farmlands that would have rich, virgin soil with gentle rolling slopes. Joseph Ellicott was an early settler in Elba, Genesee County. Elba had been erected from the larger townships of Batavia in March 1820. The Ellicott household included a free colored female in the 1830 census and that places her right in the center of the family of an early pioneer.

Free blacks had some choices which they could make about where they would settle and Genesee County was just not one of them. But the county served as an area through which hundreds of

African Americans passed as they made their way northward in their escape, via the Underground Railroad.

The Town of LeRoy was active in the 1830s in the Underground Railroad and antislavery meetings were held around this area in 1847 under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church, and with Frederick Douglass as a speaker. Indeed, because of its reputation as an Underground Railroad station, United States marshals spent time there, on several occasions, looking for fugitive slaves. This would have been an added reason why blacks who were escaping from slavery would simply have accepted the hospitality of the Quakers or the Presbyterian churchmen and then passed on to Canada or other points where they could maintain their anonymity.[91] LeRoy, for instance, had only 13 blacks living there in 1860, on the eve of the Civil War. Batavia, a larger town and the County's administrative center, had 39 blacks in 1860 - the largest number of any of the towns of Genesee County. Altogether, the County had 32,105 white persons and 84 African-Americans in 1860.

The blacks living in LeRoy must have been part of the Underground activity taking place in their town in the ante-bellum period, for LeRoy was a busy transit point, as was the town of Elba. They would have been needed sometimes to help give rest to runaways as they followed Route 19 northward. Mary McCulley describes this busy networking in the ante-bellum years in this fashion:

> The escaped slaves...usually entered New York State in the Elmira or Orlean areas having followed the Susquehanna or Allegheny Rivers....They were passed on to friends until they reached the Arcade area....then on to Warsaw, near Pear Creek. From there they followed Route 19 and the Oatka Creek north to Bern Road thence to a lane just west of Lapp Insulator. This led to MacDonald's[92] hideaways for rest. He shunted them north by wagon pulled by black horses over many of the east-west roads to stations in...Elba and Oakfield and northwest[93] to spots along the Niagara River and freedom...

After the Civil War, in 1870, the entire County of Genesee had 153 black persons. This figure became 151 in 1880 and went even lower in 1890 to 129 African Americans at a time when the Rochester and Buffalo black populations were increasing dramatically.

There was some growth by 1915, and once this occurred, blacks put in place their most important institution, the church. In 1915, the Second Baptist Church and Sunday School was established by a small group of African-Americans in LeRoy. They met at the home of Emma Alexander and began their first services in rented rooms with 19 charter members. By 1917, they were able to buy the Myrtle Street School and they converted it into a church building. Later, they bought a house at 86 Myrtle Street as a parsonage.[94] The names of the pastors have been recorded by Mary McCulley and we can assume that they became the leaders of the black community in LeRoy.[95]

In 1930, the entire Genesee County had 339 black residents in a population of 44,468 persons. In 1940, when the Great Migration had brought tens of thousands North, Genesee County, still largely rural, had only negligible population increases for both white and black. That figure was 343 blacks in a population of 44,481. Like so many other rural New York areas, the County of Genesee was not a choice location for African Americans.

Niagara County

African Americans were among the early settlers of Niagara County. In his book, *The Development of Central and Western New York*, Clayton Jau wrote that in 1804 the little Niagara Community already had African American residents who were "generally an industrious and civil people," with "an attachment to this country, as they live well."[96] This general observation placed blacks, at least in the Niagara region, in the earliest years of its settlement by whites, and the reference to their "industriousness," and to their "living well," allow us to infer that these were free and independent persons in 1804.

Niagara County was on the border between Canada and America and thousands of African Americans crossed at various points into Canada and back again into the United States. That they crossed here did not necessarily mean that Niagara County would become a safe haven where fugitives would settle. The county was just too well-traversed for black fugitives to feel that they were safe from recapture. Niagara, moreover, was a place where visiting Southerners came to see the Falls and to take a trip on the Erie Canal.[97]

The first federal census taken after Niagara had become a county without the City of Buffalo in its jurisdiction, was in 1830. Using both the 1820 and the 1830 census data, we have found that 17 free black heads of households lived in Niagara County in the decade between 1820 and 1830. If allowances are made for two individuals whose names seem to have appeared in error more than once, that number was 14 free black heads of households.

In Lockport, there were the families of Jacob Davis, Robert Prindewell, William Rogers, and Samuel Woodruff. In Lewiston, there were Caesar Harder, J.S. South and P.G. South. The two Souths had lived in Lewis since 1820 and were probably relatives. In Hartland, there was Simon Wells who also had been in the County in 1820. The town of Niagara was home to the families of Lewis Richards, Abraham Thompson, Catherine Thompson, and Harry Wood. The Thompsons and Harry Wood had lived in Niagara since 1820. There was one free black head of household in Royalton, Jacob Dunbar; and in Cambria there was the household of Robert Scott.

Niagara County was at least as promising a venue for black residents as Rochester in Monroe County in the first few decades of the nineteenth century, but it was Lockport, not the town of Niagara, which became the center of black population growth. By 1850, Niagara County had 317 black residents, 202 of them in Lockport, 41 in the town of Niagara, and 44 in the town of Porter. Lewiston had only 9 black residents; Newfane only 8, and Wheatfield had 12.

It was the canal which offered employment to this growing concentration of black residents in Lockport in the ante-bellum years, and it was the service jobs associated with Niagara Falls which determined the increase in Niagara's population by 1860.

Black residents of the town of Niagara set about building their churches, even when the population was small. Between 1836 and 1837, when the A.M.E. congregations were taking shape in Buffalo and Rochester, Niagara too, with a congregation of just 22 persons, formed its first African Methodist Society.

Lockport became the center of a self-respecting black community and their signal nineteenth century contribution was the battle for equal education. It involved the leaders of the black community, many of them churchmen.

It was not easy to maintain self-esteem since there was open hostility against black freedom fighters before the Civil War, and the determination to prevent the emergence of equal treatment for black persons after the War. Lockport gained a measure of notoriety when hecklers broke up an abolitionist meeting in the Presbyterian Church there in 1836, at which time, forty Presbyterians withdrew from that church to form a Congregational Church.[98]

The city treated the black residents as a caste group, hence it barred black children from attending schools with white children. Lockport continued to maintain a separate school for black children on South Street, but was eventually challenged by black leaders during the era of Reconstruction.

The Reverend C.W. Mossell of the African Methodist Church was a distinguished black citizen of Lockport. In January 1871, he petitioned the Lockport Board of Education to transfer his children from the African School on South Street to the High Street school for whites. Mossell lived on High Street. He petitioned a select committee of three which in turn referred to the State Superintendent of Education for the ruling. Blacks in Lockport were optimistic that the case would usher in the opening up of white educational institutions to black children. But Mossell was denied permission to transfer his children to the white school.[99]

Racism was an important explanation for the decrease in the black population from 1870 until the end of the century. In 1870, that population stood at 448. In 1880 it fell to 399; and in 1890, it fell again to 387. At a time when Buffalo and Rochester were attracting the first wave of post-Civil War black migrants from the South, Lockport's provincialism and decades-long racism factored it out as a place where blacks could make a living with any degree of success.

The World War I migration had some effect on Niagara County, but it was certainly no match for Buffalo. Lockport's black population in 1930 was 1,132, the white population 148,197. In 1940, those figures were 1,226 and 158,884 respectively. With improved transportation, Buffalo was within easy reach of the residents of Lockport and Niagara, who now turned to Buffalo for their leisure time and for their social action involvement. Consequently, Niagara County paled beside Erie County as an emergent black community.

Allegany County

African Americans, free and slave, were part of the early history of Allegany County. The census of 1810 listed, for the Town of Angelica, 21 free persons and 22 slaves. The latter were household servants. One slavemaster, Philip Church, had ten slaves in his household. There were four households with one slave each; two with three; and one with two slaves.

In 1820, when the county was still in its developing stages, the census named three free black heads of household, John Brown and Samuel Francis of Rushford, and George Jagua of the town of Nunda. Of the three, Francis was still in the county ten years later, but his town of residence became Haight. The census of 1820 was probably incomplete as there are many discrepancies in the lists given.

In 1830, there were considerably more free men and women listed as living on their own as heads of families in Allegany County. Twenty-one heads of household were named. The Hough family, Ezekiel and Stephen, had the distinction of being relatives residing in contiguous towns. Ezekiel lived with his family in Friendship and Stephen with his family in Rushford.

Rushford had four other black families in 1830. There was the family of Jack Linsky, the family of John Crawford (soon to leave for Geneseo), the family of Clement Shorter, and that of J.R. Ray. Friendship listed two black families, the Ezekiel Hough family, and that of Mary Wiggin. Angelica was in the unique position of having four female-headed households.

Charlotte Smith was the head of her family, as were Debby, Mary McKinzy and Eliza Thompson. The Harvey Young household also belonged to the town of Angelica.

In Birdsall were four families - those of Judith Freeman, Perry Jones, John Brown and Daniel Hamer. Haight had two free black heads of household besides Samuel Francis. They were Joseph Turner and Jonathan Brown. George Sagar lived in Grove, and Mary Hann in Caneadea.

Not only was there isolation brought about by the rural conditions of Allegany County, but in the decades before the Civil War, unscrupulous traders forced bona fide free Northern blacks into slavery in the South. There was a spate of kidnappings and recorded abuses of the Fugitive Slave Law. In part, this explains why the hamlets of rural New York had only tiny black populations. It was safer to continue on to Canada if freedom was to be protected; or to join the relatively large communities of free blacks in urban centers in the state. Thus we see, for example, that in the town of Almond in Allegany County, there were no black persons whatsoever.[100]

Although the black population in Allegany County was small, the antislavery sentiment was quite strong, made even stronger by the visit of Charles Grandison Finney to the Rochester area in 1831. Helene C. Phelan maintained in her book, *And Why Not Every Man?* that certain pastors of the Presbyterian Churches in the towns of Angelica, Almond, Friendship and Cuba, influenced their congregations into an abhorrence of slavery.[101] Black sojourners would therefore have found a hospitable climate in Allegany County; and those planning to reside there would have been able to receive help from the local white community. The Friendship Baptist Church also went on record with a resolution on January 13, 1850 that "we regard the holding of human beings as goods as a moral evil. We will not admit to fellowship slave holders or those who justify slavery."[102]

Allegany County lay along a main line of the Underground Railroad and was accustomed to black fugitives passing through the community. The area filtered unknown hundreds of fugitive slaves on through to destinations elsewhere, especially Canada.

Canada was British and under English law, specifically the Somerset Case, anyone who set foot on English soil could make the presumption that he or she was free. England had declared that she would "not depart from the principle recognized by British Courts that every man is free who reaches British ground."[103] For most of the fifty years preceding the Civil War then, there were good reasons why fugitives headed for Canada, and why American abolitionists gave them safe haven on this journey Northward.

Angelica, Almond, and Friendship, enter into African American history because they were stops on the Underground Railroad. In Friendship, there was the Hatch House where Jeremiah and Lucy Hatch lived from 1850 to 1862. Hatch was an abolitionist and his home is now widely accepted as a stop on the Underground Railroad. A second stop was the Cotton Farm on the road between Friendship and Cuba. It had a room "big enough for three people" placed behind a fireplace where fugitives might have stayed. Cotton was an abolitionist. A third house was owned and occupied by Luke Babcock at 81 West Main Street in Friendship. Beside it was a Presbyterian manse where there was spiritual support for the stance which this family dared to take. A fourth involvement was through the Hammond family of 146 West Main Street in Friendship.[104]

In Scio, Allegany County, a William Knight operated the station and, just outside of the town of Belmont, was the most well known stop of all - the farm of William Sortore. Sortore hid fugitives in his barn and actually helped transport them in a wagon with a false bottom, to other points on the railroad.[105] In the town of Almond "was a stone house in Karr Valley built by Stephen Major in 1822." Apparently, Stephen and his son, Thomas Majors, were both ardent abolitionists, members of the Presbyterian Church, and conductors on the Underground Railroad.[106]

Everything had to be done in great secrecy, and beyond verifying their activities, the historian cannot give a count of the number of people who were afforded safe conduct through Allegany County.

The black community of counties like Allegany, worshipped in the white churches, since they were too few in number to sustain their own African-American Church. Indeed, the black settlers in the town of Friendship, did not get their first African Methodist Episcopal Church until after the Civil War.[107]

In 1860, Allegany had a total black population of 264 or 0.63 percent of the white population of 41,617. The greatest concentrations of black persons were in the town of Scio, with 63 out of a total population of 1,631; Canadea with 46 black persons out of a total population of 2,125 persons; Cuba had 12 blacks in a population of 2,187; Amity had 12 blacks out of a total of 2,268; and Angelica had 12 blacks out of a total population of 1,708 persons.

The migration at the end of the nineteenth century passed by Allegany County. In 1870, there were 349 blacks; in 1880, this figure dropped to 331. Rather than move within Allegany County, blacks had moved out to areas of more promising employment. The 1940 census, which elsewhere reflected the Great Migration of the World War I era, actually showed a precipitous drop in the numbers of blacks in Allegany County. In

1930 that figure was 169 blacks in a population of 38,025; and in 1940, there were 162 blacks in a population of 39,681 persons. African Americans were becoming an urban people and Allegany County, never attractive to large numbers, became less so in the years following the two World Wars.

Chautauqua County

African Americans came to Chautauqua County with the very earliest settlers. They came in the service of the Prendergast family as slaves. The Prendergasts were founders of Jamestown, New York, but were scattered over the county.

The 1810 census listed three slaves in the town of Pomfret living in the household of a T. Prendergast, another in the home of an M. Prendergast, and a third in the household of an A. McIntyre. In 1814, there were five slaves listed in Chautauqua County and one free black man whose description is given, though not his name. This person was released from bondage by Mathew Prendergast.

In the 1820 census, the number of slaves was back to three. Jedediah Prendergast of the town of Chautauqua owned two female slaves and Thomas Prendergast owned one male slave.[108] Later inquiry disclosed the names of these persons of African ancestry. Tom was the name of the person serving William Prendergast in those early years; Jack and Maria served Judge Mathew Prendergast and Maria had a son named Jonas; Nan and Ann were the two women in the service of Dr. Jedediah Prendergast and lived in his household in Ripley.[109]

It is not known exactly when the first free black families came to Chautauqua, but they were there when the 1820 census was taken. Samuel Comstock lived in the town of Chautauqua and York Halsey in the town of Hanover. This places these two African Americans in the area at approximately the same time as the early white settlers, like the Prendergasts. The Halsey family was an extended one, for Cuff Halsey and Jabez Halsey were free heads of household living in Sheridan by 1830.

When the 1830 census was taken, seven other free black families had established themselves in Chautauqua. It is certain that they were not fugitives from the slave states. They were probably Northern-born and bred, fully entitled to the freedom which New York and other Northern states had made into law. Three black families lived in the town of Sheridan, Job Clark's family, and Cuff and Jabez Halsey's. Two families, probably related to each other, established homes in the Town of Ellicott; they were Nancy Wright and Abraham Wright. The William Harris family lived in Busti, and the Charles Jackson family in the town of Ripley.

Other black settlers in the area, stopped to make their home in Chautauqua instead of continuing through to Canada. They generally worked on farms or as domestics. The most prominent black family in Chautauqua County was the Storum family of Busti. Their abolition work went beyond the transport of fugitives to an ideological stance against slavery. They were host to some of the important black abolitionist speakers of the time - men like Jermain Loguen who married their daughter, Caroline. Loguen was a Bishop of the A.M.E. Zion Churches in Central New York. The Storum family also hosted Lewis Clarke, a fugitive slave and lecturer on the abolitionist platform. On their farm they sometimes gave employment to fugitives who wanted a period of respite before moving on to the next stop. This was so in the case of fugitive, Harrison Williams, age 20, who was seized from the Storum farm by slave catchers dressed as women in 1851.[110] The community responded quickly to the alarms sounded by the Storum family - an indication that they lived and worked in harmony with the white community around them. Unfortunately, the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 protected the slave hunters and Wiliams was returned to slavery.

Another notable free black resident of the county was Katherine Harris of Jamestown. She ran a station for the Underground Railroad and her home was considered a "settlement" and was called the "African" settlement. Mrs. Harris arrived in Jamestown in 1831 and took up residence at 12 West 17th Street. She was known "to have hidden as many as seventeen slaves in a blind attic at one time." The white "conductors" were accustomed to bringing their fugitive slave "cargo" to Mrs. Harris' home in this period before the Civil War, and there is no doubt as to the white/black networking which had to be done to assure the safety of the fugitives and protect people like Mrs. Harris from discovery and from prosecution for breaking a federal law.[111]

Mrs. Harris worked as a domestic for several Jamestown families and was the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Jamestown. Her home at 12 West 17th Street was also listed as the parsonage of the Church.[112] On the eve of the Civil War, Jamestown had some 120 black persons living there; most were fugitive slaves within easy reach of Canada should they need to leave the United States in a hurry.

Chautauqua County was vital to the Underground Railroad because it offered safe haven and a number of stops. Helene C. Phelan illustrates the number of stops and the number of homes or farms where conductors could leave the fugitives until it was time for their journey to begin again.

In 1850, Chautauqua had 140 black residents and 50,353 white residents. Of the 45 children between the ages of 5 and 15, 19 attended school during the year. On the eve of the Civil War, in 1860, the black population was 205 and the white population 58,213. Black children attended the publicly supported school. In that year, Jamestown had 55 blacks out of a total population of 3,155; Westfield had 36 out of 3,640; Dunkirk 22 out of 5,616; Pomfret 19 out of 4,293; and the town of Busti had 12 black residents out of a total population of 2,011. None of these concentrations represented a large enough adult population to properly nurture a church except with great difficult.

In the post Civil War era, Chautauqua's population dropped dramatically, showing that the towns were not held to be areas where the black population was welcome or where gainful employment was open to them. In 1870, the number of blacks in Chautauqua County dropped to 195; in 1880 it dropped further to 158; and in 1890 still further to 148. Out-Migration was taking place here, while in-migration was going on elsewhere in the larger cities of New York.

There was an increase in the period between the Great World Wars half a century later. In 1930, there were 471 blacks in Chautauqua County out of a total population of 126,457 (0.37 percent). But in 1940, when the population was increasing elsewhere in the urban centers, it dropped in Chautauqua County and there were 400 persons out of a total population of 123,580 (0.32 percent). Fortunately, the World War increases allowed the community to develop its own churches and to foster mutual benefit relationships.

Wyoming County

Census Year	African American Population
1850	63
1860	52
1870	82
1880	98
1890	57
1930	76
1940	322

Source : Federal Census of the U.S.

The above table of the black population of Wyoming County, 1850 to 1940, illustrates dramatically how few such residents there were. In 1850, the white population was just over 15,000 and the black population was 63. Ten years later, Wyoming County's white population doubled, but blacks were leaving, and their numbers fell to 52. The exodus was caused by the new vigilance which the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 had encouraged. Many African Americans fled their Upstate homes and went to Canada in this very frightening decade before the Civil War. Even in 1860 the largest free black population in the County only stood at 18 (Gainesville) and 16 (Warsaw). Because the population was so small, there were no black churches, and black residents either had to go the distance to towns in nearby counties, or worship with white congregations.

Wyoming County was rural with only a few small towns and no major urban concentration. Consequently, blacks seeking a place where they could make a living and form community bonds with other blacks, selected Rochester, Syracuse or Buffalo instead. Nonetheless, Wyoming County has some significance in the history of African Americans because one route of the Underground Railroad ran through the County. Arcade in Wyoming County has been described as "a logical center for paths going off in all directions, from Rushford in Allegany...to the east and south of it, and from Orlean and sometimes the Erie areas..."[113] Arcade was even called "Niggerville" by opponents of abolition because it was so intimately involved in helping the slaves to freedom. The Congregational Church in Arcade was the source of much abolition support and it was at one time host to an Antislavery Convention. Horatio N. Waldo used his woolen mill to hide fugitive slaves and the Reverend Ralston W. Lyman also hid slaves. A Colonel Charles O. Shepard and Samuel Tilden, put in their lot as conductors.[114]

The road between Arcade and Attica, at Humphrey Hollow, was a stop on the Underground Railroad. There was a farm and a saw mill belonging to a Leslie Humphrey. Another farm owned by Mathew Eastman, just three and a half miles south of Attica, was another station. Helene Phelan has described the route as leading on next to Warsaw, to the home of Michael Smallwood on East Hill. Smallwood was from England and he used the cellar of his home and a swamp nearby to secure the safety of the fugitives.[115]

Warsaw was important for another reason. It was there that Seth Gates, later to be a member of Congress (1838-1842) and nationally prominent, served the Underground Railroad. Another prominent agent of abolition was Isaac Phelps, also of Warsaw.

One of the most poignant tales of abolition came out of this area. In the ante-bellum period, two helpful District of Columbia market gardeners placed a Virginia slave woman and her daughter in a box with straw, food and water and shipped the box to Isaac Phelps in Warsaw. The trip took 22 days. In Warsaw, the two were taken out of the box and sent to Arcade to be hidden there for three weeks. Then they were shunted again to Warsaw where the mother was given work and where she gave birth to yet another daughter. The two girls were brought up in Warsaw when their mother died of tuberculosis within a year of their arrival in Warsaw.[116] Agents of the owners of the slave woman (Sadie) and her older daughter (Lila) did come after the pair, but were warned that their safety could not be ensured.

There was, therefore, support for abolition, even in this relatively secluded, very rural, New York county. But there was never much work available here to encourage black settlers to come in large numbers. When they happened to pass through, they simply moved on to other towns.

The black population never grew, remaining under 100 for the entire county as late as the 1930s, when farm labor shortages forced Wyoming truck farmers to hire seasonal migrant workers. However, A few of the African-American residents living in the town can claim ancestors who were there when the county was first made into an administrative unit by an Act of the Legislature in 1841.

Livingston County

Livingston County has always had a tiny black population. One of the most rural sections of New York State, African Americans went to Livingston County as fugitives from slavery and some stayed on as domestic servants in what was a relatively secluded area. The region was located on a well-traversed Underground Railroad route and the surrounding country seemed to offer the anonymity that some fugitives desired.

Helene C. Phelan, in her book *And Why Not Every Man?* said that her earliest record of a black presence in Livingston County was a slave Jenny, who "was William Wadsworth's companion" when the Wadsworths went to the Geneseo area. Jenny "provided home and labor for these pioneers."[117] A second African-American was the companion of a Frenchman who settled on the Wadsworth's property in a log cabin. His name was not known, nor was any record kept of his whereabouts and that of the French, De Boni. When the William Fitzhugh and Caroll families went to the Genesee Valley, they brought slaves with them and freed them by 1815. According to Phelan, "the climate discouraged the use of field hands."[118]

Of the well-known free black persons in the area then, Noah Russell becomes the first early settler of some importance about whom we have some record. Russell lived as a free man and had a family of 13 children, one of whom, Henry Russell, was born on March 4, 1841. Henry Russell, the son, served with the 8th United States Colored Regiment during the Civil War and returned to live in Geneseo after the War. He died in Geneseo in 1913. In her account of the Underground Railroad in Upstate New York, Phelan speculated that the Henry Russell family would have been involved in the protection of fugitives on the Underground Railroad.

Livingston County was also the home of a family of Thompsons who may have come to the area at the same time and then pursued their occupations in contiguous towns. The 1830 census listed, as black heads of households, John Thompson of Geneseo, and William Thompson of the town of Leicester. The William Thompson family consisted of two adults and two children, a boy and a girl. The town of Leicester (which was linked to Genesee County in the 1830 census) had 24 free colored persons. William Thompson had lived in Leicester since, at least, 1820, because his name appeared on that census as a free black head of household. Four other heads of household named in 1830 were William Hodge of Groveland, Haxulus Williams of Conesus, James Wood of Sparta, and Jacob Wright of Springwater.

The town of Geneseo was also home to fugitive slave John Crawford, who ran away from his Virginia slaveholders, leaving his wife behind as he headed for Canada on the Underground Railroad. He returned South to bring his wife with him, but she had been sold and no one knew where she was. It was on his Northern return trip that Crawford stopped in Geneseo and made his home there until his death in 1864. He may have been the same John Crawford listed in the 1830 census as being a resident of nearby Rushford in Allegany County.

Crawford lived an exemplary life in Geneseo. He served as sexton in the Methodist Church of which he was a "devout member." He was held to be a "sensible, shrewd man." He was self-employed, running a delivery business using a wheelbarrow on which was written "Crawford's Express." To his independence and his religious zeal could be added his hatred of slavery. Crawford was known for his "ABHORRENCE" of the peculiar institution, and it can be assumed that he too joined forces with those operating the Underground Railroad. He earned sufficient respect during his lifetime for the county newspaper, *The Livingston Republican*, to publish a eulogy upon his death.[119]

In the years preceding the Civil War, the county showed a population of 209 blacks in 1850, but 184 in 1860. The fall in the numbers could have been caused by the general exodus of blacks to Canada following the stricter Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. In 1850 also, there were 30 black children attending school and they appear to have gone to the same schools provided for white children.

In 1860, the white population stood at 39,362 and the black at just 184. The town of Geneseo had the most, 44 blacks; followed by the towns of Leicester, 36; Avon, 26; Lima, 22; and Mt. Morris, 17. Clearly, Livingston County was not a popular choice among blacks. The family farms did not offer year round employment and the inland towns did not offer the range of occupations which could be had at the port of calls on the Erie Canal.

In the ante-bellum era, the Avon Inn had been a stopping place for many Southern visitors who left the heat of the Southern summer for the cool and quiet of rural New York resorts. Blacks seeking anonymity would have been wary of settling in an area so well-traversed by Southerners. The hamlets of Livingston County were sojourning towns on the way to Canada.

After the Civil War, Livingston County's black population remained small. It was 215 in 1870, 293 in 1880, and dropped to 247 in 1890. Livingston County was unaffected by the late 19th century migration which brought some Southern blacks northward.

In the twentieth century, the Great Migration of the World War I and World War II eras did not affect Livingston County in any appreciable way. The 1930 census showed the black population to be 473 and the 1940 census showed an increase by 42 persons to 515. Thus when Erie and Monroe Counties were experiencing dramatic increases in their black populations, Livingston County, with no major industrial center, was passed over.

Cattaraugus County

Asylum Peter was a black man who came in 1806 to the area of Cerestown in Cattaraugus County, near Orlean, in the company of a surveyor, John Brevost. Asylum Peter had been born in 1793 in Pennsylvania and came to Orlean as Brevost's cook and his slave. When Brevost left the area in 1808, he sold Peter to William Ayers of Coudersport "with the understanding that Peter would be freed at age 21," and be provided with "a fair, common education."[120] Peter was never educated. He never married, but probably kept in touch with the Ayers family. He was buried in the family's cemetery. His presence, even though transitory, placed him in the county with the earliest settlers.

The 1810 census listed a T. Farret as a free black head of household in the town of Olean when it was part of Niagara County. Nothing is known of this pioneer, except his name and the fact that there were four persons in his family.

Cattaraugus County eventually became a busy route on the Underground Railroad, linking up with other New York State points leading to Canada. But, before this activity even developed, there were free African Americans residing in the county who were listed in the 1830 census as bona fide heads of household. Samuel Ogden of the town of Randolph and Robert Wright of the town of Perrysburgh are counted along with Asylum and T. Farret as being among the earliest blacks on record in the county.

Helen Phelan credited the Underground Railroad activity from Pennsylvania to the town of Olean in Cattaraugus, as being "probably the most active routes between Bath and the western counties of Chautauqua and Cattaraugus...."[121]

It would have been surprising if some fugitives had not stayed to live in the community of such apparently helpful people. Cattaraugus' early black residents included several who were fugitive slaves and who just decided not to go on to Canada but to stay close enough to the border so that flight there was still an option.

Phelan described the busy Olean route in this way:

> ...from Olean, the route through New York ran in several directions. Three routes ran across Cattaraugus County... One began at Buck Pond outside Olean where a Genesee Valley Canal Boat took "passengers" up the Ischua Creek (Isaac Searle). It then went to Cadiz (the home of Dr. Mead who first gave shelter to Sarah Johnson, the best known of the slaves who found freedom in the area). Finally it went to Arcade where the station was in Walden's Woolen Mill.[122]

Sarah Johnson was one of the fugitives who stayed on in Olean and in turn helped on the Underground Railroad by hiding other fugitives during the period before the Civil War. As early as 1825 to 1826, this Olean route was reported to be a busy one and it still was in 1858 when one fugitive wrote complaining that there were too many other fugitives around for whom Orlean had become "the end of the line." He was probably nervous that the increasing number of fugitives taking up residence in Olean might lead slave catchers to him there.[123] Olean became "one of the places of permanent settlement for some families," who did not bother to take the next step over into Canada.[124]

In 1860, there were 90 African Americans living in Olean, out of a total population of 2,706. The town of Yorkshire had the next largest concentration of blacks, 26 persons of color in a total population of 1,844. In the whole of Cattaraugus County in 1860, the white population was 43,735. The total black population was only 151 or .34 percent of the population of the county. As with other rural Upstate counties, Cattaraugus did not attract significant in-migration when compared to urban centers of the state during the 1880s. In 1870, the black population of Cattaraugus was 164; in 1880, 248; and in 1890, 249. The post World War I figures were 468 for 1930 and 436 for 1940. The rise was due to the decision of seasonal farm workers to stay on in Cattaraugus.

The moderate growth between the 1870s and the 1880s, allowed the formation of an African Methodist Episcopal Church in Olean. When the building burned, the congregation replaced it in 1900. The town of Friendship also established an African Methodist Episcopal Church. The Church of God in

Christ established a congregation in Olean in 1925. By then the population of the county had doubled its figures of the previous century.

Orleans County

Orleans County was separated from Genesee County and became a distinct entity on January 1, 1826. Two-thirds of the area has since become farmland, but it did so after the land was reclaimed from "swamp wilderness" where early settlers developed fever and ague. Once the Erie Canal was completed in 1825, more attention was paid to farming, since cheap transportation was available. Consequently, wheat became the major crop and this area was known as the "bread basket of the world."[125]

Parts of Orleans County, namely the town of Medina, had sandstone and so quarrying became an important industry and a big employer. But for most of the county's residents, agriculture was the main occupation. Emphasis steadily shifted to truck farming and its related manufacturing industries, with less emphasis on wheat. The raising of fruit, peas, beans, corn, tomatoes, lettuce, carrots, potatoes, spinach and onions became the major activity of these drained swamps. Dry houses for drying fruit and canning factories, were related processing industries.[126]

Blacks who lived in Orleans County either before or after the Civil War, would have been involved in farmwork. Indeed, the town of Barre had a black population of 8 in 1830, then 13 in 1850, then 56 in 1860 - the largest recorded in Orleans towns in that year. Most worked on the farms, all the while performing the difficult clearing away of muckland that was ongoing for most of the nineteenth century.

Orleans was never a choice preserve of free black persons. In 1830, there were only 29 blacks in the entire county. That figure rose to 108 in 1850, and to only 131 in 1860 on the eve of the Civil War. After the War, the black population rose slightly, but also fell precipitously. In 1870, there were 172 black persons in Orleans County. In 1880, there were 224; in 1890 that figure dropped to 194. By 1930, when black migration was taking place in the North, rural Orleans County could not compete. It lost 56 percent of its black population.

Orleans was in danger of losing its entire black population. The out-migration was pointing in that direction, but a determined recruitment of farm laborers during the labor shortages occasioned by World War II saw a dramatic increase again to 199 in 1940 (up from 84 in 1930). Most of these new black residents were workers imported from the Caribbean island of Jamaica. Gradually, many remained as permanent residents in the area.[127]

It is important to point out, however, that for Orleans County as a whole, the population increase has been described as "almost static."[128] None of the towns of Orleans has had a large enough black population for the emergence of full-blown black institutions of church and mutual aid societies as we have seen occur elsewhere. Most black residents took the trip to Rochester, Monroe County, or to Buffalo in Erie County for purposes of socializing. It gave them the opportunity to set aside their relative isolation for the vigor of the black community, now grown so large in post-World II Rochester and Buffalo.

To a certain extent the Rochester black population was a centrifugal force, not only for the African-American people of Monroe County, but for those of nearby areas like Orleans. New York's rural counties like Orleans now depend on the large black urban centers like Rochester for recreation, spiritual communion, and mutual aid services.

1.

See Unpublished speech presented by Dr. Monroe Fordham at the Genesee County Museum, April 19, 1983, in which he quoted from H. Perry Smith, *History of the City of Buffalo.*

2. Ralph Richard Watkins, "Black Buffalo 1920-1927," (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Buffalo, 1978), p.6.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

4. John R. McKivigan and Jason Silverman, "Monarchial Liberty and Republican Slavery: West Indies Emancipation Celebrations in Upstate New York and Canada West," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (January 1986), pp. 7-18.

5. Ralph Watkins, "Black Buffalo, 1920-1927," p. 10; also Unpublished Speech by Monroe Fordham to the Genesee County Museum.

6. See Monroe Fordham, *A History of Bethel A.M.E. Church, Buffalo, New York 1831-1977* (Buffalo, New York: The Bethel History Society, 1978), pp.8-9.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Quoted in Fordham, *A History of Bethel A.M.E. Church*, p. 11.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. Monroe Fordham, "The Ante-Bellum Reform Movement of Black Buffalonians," *The Courier Express Magazine*, 26 October 1975.

12. Lillian S. Williams, "Afro-Americans in Buffalo, 1900-1930: A Study in Community Formation," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, Volume 8, No. 2 (July 1984), p. 8.

13. Monroe Fordham, "The Ante-Bellum Reform Movement."

14. *Ibid.*

15. Monroe Fordham, *A History of Bethel A.M.E. Church*, p. 12.

16. Ralph Watkins, "Black Buffalo 1920-1927," p. 8; also Unpublished Paper by Monroe Fordham, "A Profile of the Colored Population of Buffalo, New York in 1850," p. 6.

17. Ralph Watkins, "Black Buffalo 1920-1927," p. 8; also Unpublished Paper by Monroe Fordham, "A Profile of the Colored Population of Buffalo, New York in 1850," p. 6.

18. See Monroe Fordham, Unpublished Speech at the Genesee County Museum.

19. Monroe Fordham, "A Profile of the Colored Population of Buffalo, New York in 1850." See also Lillian S. Williams, "Afro-Americans in Buffalo, 1900-1930...," p. 8.

20. James D. Bilotta, "A Quantitative Approach to Buffalo's Black Population of 1860." *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, Volume 12, No 2 (July 1988), p. 23.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Monroe Fordham, "A Profile of the Colored Population of Buffalo, New York in 1850," p. 8.

25. Ena L. Farley, "The Issue of Black Equality in New York State, 1865-1873" (Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, The University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1973), pp. 169-175.

26. See Lillian S. Williams, "Afro-Americans in Buffalo, 1900-1930: A Study in Community Formation," pp. 21-22.

27. *Ibid.*, pp.22-23.

28. *Ibid.*, quoted on p. 23.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 23-24.

30. Monroe Fordham, "The Buffalo Cooperative Economic Society, Inc., 1928-1961: A Black Self-Help Organization," *Niagara Frontier* (Summer, 1976), pp. 41-49. The records and papers of the BCES are housed in the North Jefferson Branch Library and Center for Local Afro-American History and Research, Buffalo, New York.

31. Lillian Williams, "Afro-Americans in Buffalo, pp. 23-24.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*, p. 9-10.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

46. Ralph R. Watkins, "Recreation, Leisure and Charity in the Afro-American Community of Buffalo, New York: 1920-1925," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, Volume 6, No. 2 (July 1982), pp. 7-17.

47. Lillian Williams, "Afro-Americans in Buffalo, 1900-1930: A Study in Community Formation," p. 9.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Paul Carton, "A Black Man Runs for Mayor: The Extraordinary Campaign of Arthur O. Eve," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History,* Volume 4, No. 2 (July 1980), p. 46.

50. *Upstate Magazine, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle,* 17 February 1984.

51. Musette Castle, "The Social, Economic, and Political History of the Blacks of Rochester, New York, 1800-1860," (Unpublished Paper, 1987), 39 pp.

52. *Upstate Magazine, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, 1 July 1984.

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57. *Rochester Daily Democrat*, 13 August 1853, cited by Musette Castle.

58. *Union Advertiser*, 5 March 1861.

59. John R. McKivigan and Jason H. Silverman, "Monarchial Liberty and Republican Slavery: West Indies Emancipation Celebrations in Upstate New York and Canada West," pp. 7-8.

60. *Ibid.* p. 15.

61. Musette Castle, op. cit.

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63. *Ibid.*

64. *Ibid.*

65. *Ibid.*

66. *Ibid.*

67. *Ibid.*

68. *Ibid.*

69. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle,* 22 February 1981, p. 11A.

70. *Ibid.*, 12 May 1985, 11A.

71. *Ibid.*, p.14A.

72. *Ibid.*, 22 February 1981, p. 15A.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 14A.

74. *Ibid.*

75. *Ibid.*, 12 May 1985, p. 11A.

76. *Ibid.*, 28 February 1981, p. 15A.

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79. *Ibid.*

80. *Ibid.*

81. *Ibid.*

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88. *Ibid.*

89. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

90. For example, the Joseph Ellicott household in Genesee County in the 1830 census included one free colored male; the Himman Holder household had two free colored females along with one female slave; the Clarence Thomas household had one free colored female; the Joseph Stone family had one free colored female; the Roswell Hunt household had one free female under 26 years of age along with his eight slaves.

91. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

92. Daniel MacDonald, a Scottish clergyman whose house on Randall Road in LeRoy was an Underground stop.

93. Mary McCulley, p. 237.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 215.

95. The names of the pastors were: Herold Brown, Paul W. Strickland, St. Clair Lang, Robert Johnson, C.W. Ford, William Diggs, Reuben Shears, William Collins, Marvin Chandler, David Horner, James Goins, Henry Mitchell, James Swindell, Mark Hannah, Darryl Smaw, David Copeland, Leotis Belk, Hose Hick-

man, George MacMillan, Robert Lewis, Harvey Keely, Phillip Terry, James Lovett, Lorenzo Flemming, James E. Rose, William Parker, and Robert Turpin.

96. Clayton Jau. *The Development of Central and Western New York,* pp. 131-132.

97. Helene C. Phelan, *And Why Not Every Man?* (Interlaken, New York: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1987), p. 36. After 1850, Southerners were encouraged to spend their vacations in the South visiting Southern resorts.

98. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

99. This account of Lockport school segregation is taken from Arthur O. White, "The Black Movement Against Jim Crow Education in Lockport, New York, 1835-1876," *New York History*, Volume 50, No. 3 (1970), pp. 265-282.

100. Helene C. Phelan, *And Why Not Every Man?*, p. 44.

101. *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

102. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

103. Quoted in Phelan, p. 157.

104. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-111.

105. *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

108. Helene C. Phelan, *And Why Not Every Man?*, p. 22.

109. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

110. Bishop William J. Walls, *The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church: The Reality of the Black Church* (Charlotte, North Carolina: A.M.E. Zion Publishing House, n.d.); also Phelan, pp. 87-88.

111. Phelan, pp. 91 and 93.

112. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

113. Helene C. Phelan, *And Why Not Every Man?*, p.79.

114. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

115. *bid.*, p. 80.

116. *Ibid.*, 139

117. Helene C. Phelan, *And Why Not Every Man?*, pp. 23-24.

118. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

119. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

120. Helene C. Phelan, *And Why Not Every Man?*, p. 21.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

122. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

123. *Ibid.*

124. *Ibid.*

125. Bernard Lynch, et. al., eds., *Orleans County History: Past to Present, Bicentennial Year 1976* (Albion, New York: Eddy Printing Corporation, 1976), p. 20.

126. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

127. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

128. *Ibid.*

Survey Forms for
African American Historic Sites in New York State

Each form lists the following information:

Name and/or Description of Site

Location of Site

Site Classification

Site Registered?

Public Access?

Name and Address of Owner

Historical Significance of Site

List Of Sites And Counties In Which They Are Located

Name of Site	County
Abyssinian Baptist Church	New York
Apollo Theater	New York
Aspinwall Mansion	Jefferson
Bakeman - Woodruff House	Oswego
Ballton (Samuel) Built Home	Suffolk
Bethel A.M.E. Church and Manse	Suffolk
Broderick Park	Erie
Brown (John) Farm	Essex
Cemetery (Slave)	Dutchess
Cemetery for Colored Inhabitants of 19th Century Rye, NY.	Westchester
Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church	Erie
Ellington, Edward Kennedy "Duke" Residence	New York
First Presbyterian Church of Whitesboro	Oneida
Foster Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church	Westcheste
Guinea Woods *(See also Westbury A.M.E. Zion Church)	Nassau
Highgate (Edmonia) Burial Site	Onondaga
Hills, The	Westcheste
Hughes (Langston) House	New York
Lakeville A.M.E. Zion Church	Nassau
Lloyd Manor House (residence of slave poet Jupiter Hammon).	
Loguen, (Jermain) Gravesite	Onondaga
McGrawville, New York Central College in	Cortland
Michigan Street Baptist Church	Erie
Minton's Playhouse	New York
Mount Moor Cemetery	Rockland
Old Fort House Museum	Washington
Oneida Institute	Oneida
Orson Ames House	Oswego
Park Church	Chemung
Robeson (Paul) Residence	New York
Robinson ("Jackie") Residence	Kings
Salem A.M.E. Church	Nassau
Sandy Ground Historic Archeological District	Richmond
Seward (William) House	Cayuga
Smith, (Gerrit) Stone land office building of	Madison
St. James A.M.E. Zion Church	Tomkins
Steward, Austin Memorial	Monroe
The 369th Historical Society	New York
Tubman, (Harriet) Museum	Cayuga
Valley Road Historic District	Nassau
Villa Lewaro	Westcheste
Weeksville, Hunterfly Road Historic Houses of	Kings
Westbury A.M.E. Zion Church *(See also Guinea Woods)	Nassau

SURVEY FORM

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Abyssinian Baptist Church

Established by African Americans in 1808, the Abyssinian Congregation has played a central role in the history of African Americans in New York City and the State.

Location of Site

132 W. 138th Street
New York
NY
10030
New York County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Abyssinian Baptist Church

132 W. 138th Street
New York NY 10030

Historical Significance

"In 1808 a few African Americans, armed with their faith in Jesus and stregthened by mercies already seen, left the worship service of the First Baptist Church of New York City and withdrew forever their membership. These African Americans, accompanied by a group of Ethiopian merchants, were unwilling to accept racially-segregated seating in God's house and determined that they would organize their own church. During June, they established themselves in a building on Anthony Street (later Worth Street) calling themselves the Abyssinian Baptist Church--a name inspired by the ancient name of the nation from which the merchants of Ethiopia had come, Abyssinia. The Rev. Mr. Thomas Paul, who had come down from Boston to help the congregation, became the first pastor of this newly-established and first African American Baptist Church in the state of New York.

Under the leadership of its first pastor, Abyssinian bought property on Worth Street. After several years a new building was needed and the members sold the property for $3,000. Thereafter they held services at the Broadway Tabernacle in a buildings on Thompson and Spring Streets before seeking another permanent place of worship. At the close of the Rev. Mr. Paul's ministry, Abyssinian called the Rev. Mr. William Spelman to serve as its pastor. During his administration from 1856 to 1885, the membership increased to 1,600 and the $3,000 realized from the sale of the Worth Street property was applied to the purchase of a church building on Waverly Place. Following Spellman's retirement, the Rev. Mr. Robert D. Wynn of Norwich, Connecticut was called to the pastorate of the church. For sixteen years he led a congregation that continued to increase in numbers and together they freed the Waverly Place property from indeptedness. Shortly after the turn of the century, the Rev. Charles Satchell Morris-who in later years became a missionary to South Africa-succeeded Robert Wynn as Abyssinian's minister. From 1902 until his health failed in May of 1908, Morris led in a manner his successor was to call "brilliant." The Waverly Place church was sold and the income used to begin purchasing both a church and an apartment house on Fortieth Street. When illness, however, interfered with his administration and ministry, Dr. Morris relinquished the pastorate....

On December 30, 1908, God brought together the congregation of Abyssinian Baptist Church and the Rev. Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr. (1865-1953).... The calling of Powell to the pastorate ushered in a new era in the Church's history. [He] devoted the first twelve years of his pastorate to the spiritual development and reorganization of the church.... He preached about and promoted the idea of a model church in Harlem. By the spring of 1920 Abyssinians had purchased lots on 138th Street between Lenox and Seventh Avenue.... On June 17, 1923, the congregation dedicated the new church and community house which had been built at a cost of over $330,000. Rev. Powell, Sr., led the congregation until his retirement in 1937.

The intrepid preacher-politician, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. (1908-1972), the only son of Mattie Fletcher Powell and Adam, Sr., succeeded his father, serving as pastor from 1937 until 1971. (Excerpt from a brochure entitle, "The Abyssinian Baptist Church," which is a publication of the Church).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Apollo Theater

The premier performance hall for black American performers and a symbol of the movement to promote black cultural awareness in the 1930s.

Location of Site

253 West 125th Street
New York
NY

New York County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Inner City Broadcasting Corp.
802 Second Avenue
New York NY

Historical Significance

The Apollo Theater is historically and architecturally significant for its role as one of New York City's and the nation's leading entertainment centers for over four decades. Completed in 1914 as a burlesque house, it later became the premier performance hall for black American performers and a symbol of the movement to promote black cultural awareness in the 1930s. Its contribution as a nuturing force and a showcase of black talent ranks it as one of this country's most significant cultural resources.

During much of the 19th century, Harlem was a fashionable suburb for wealthy and upper-middle class white Manhattan residents. At the turn of the century, following the completion of subway routes, speculative overbuilding of rowhouses and apartment buildings resulted in a real estate bust in 1904. At that time, major black neighborhoods, (the west side, streets 20s-60s), were experiencing redevelopment and the residents were being displaced. The combination of available real estate in Harlem and displacement from other neighborhoods made Harlem attractive to New York City blacks, who began to move into Harlem around 1910.

This migration increased during the 1920s as blacks moved to Harlem from the American south and the West Indies. During these years, Harlem became the urban cultural capital of black America. The "center" of Harlem was then considered to be around 135th Street, between Lenox and Seventh Avenues. By the 1930s, as the black population moved southward, 125th Street, already a major shopping and entertainment throughfare, became the "Main Street" of black Harlem.

Built as Hurtig and Seamon's New (Burlesque) Theater, the Apollo originally catered to a primarily white clientele and presented the popular entertainment of the day--burlesque. The New Theater was in operation until 1934, when a crackdown on burlesque shows was undertaken by Mayor La Guardia's administration. In 1935 Frank Schiffman and Leo Brecher, two white businessmen, purchased the building and remaned it the Apollo Theater. Under their direction, the theater presented a permanent variety show which featured leading black entertainers.

The Apollo became the center for Harlem's popular entertainment and one of the nation's most important arenas for the display of leading black performing talent for a period of four decades. "Harlem recognized no popular entertainer until he or she had appeared or excelled at the Apollo." Throughout its history, it displayed every form of popular black entertainment, including comedy, drama, dance, gospel, blues, jazz, swing, bebop, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, and soul music. In programing such a variety of black entertainers, the Apollo's management contributed to the development of Harlem into the major urban cultural and intellectural center for blacks in the United States. (Excerpt from National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, prepared by Merrill Hesch).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Aspinwall Mansion

The house was once used as a station on the "underground railroad." The Aspinwall's were supporters of the abolitionist cause.

Location of Site

Henderson
NY
13650
Jefferson County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- UN (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- NO (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Historical Significance

In the days of the "underground railroad," Harriet Aspinwall made the Aspinwall house a station for the conceilment of escaped southern Negro slaves as Gerrit Smith sent them northward from New Hartford. Leaving Aspinwall's, the fugitives went to Cape Vincent, where J.W. Little, grandfather of Harriet Montague, spirited them across the border to Canada. (Compiled and submitted by Helen B. Quimby, Henderson Town Historian).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Bakeman - Woodruff House
A house in the Town of Granby, N.Y., that was originally built by an Afro-American around 1832.

Location of Site
Corner, Rt. 8 & Harris Hill Rd
Town of Granby
NY
13069
Oswego County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Judy Wellman
R.D. 7, Box 168
Fulton NY 13069

Historical Significance

The Bakeman-Woodruff House at first glance presents a mystery. Basically Greek Revival in detail, the main body of the house is almost square, twenty feet across the front by twenty-four feet deep. Windows on either side of the front door are uneven in height. One window is a full clapboard lower than the other.

The clues suggest the very unusual origin of this house. It was built at two different times, first by an Afro-American and then by an Anglo-American. Jacob Bakeman was a member of the only black family living in Granby in the early nineteenth century. His father, Henry, was one of Granby's first settlers, and the family accumulated a great deal of land in the area, including two mills next door to this house. These mills had been constructed in 1819 by Seth Camp, and the mill pond is still visible from the house.

Bakeman took out a mortgage in 1832, and it is likely that he built a post-and-beam house here about that time. Departing from Anglo-American folk house forms, which tended to be built with sixteen feet as a standard dimension on one side, Bakeman built his house on an Afro-American pattern. As James Deetz pointed out in SMALL THINGS FORGOTTEN: THE ARCHEOLOGY OF EARLY AMERICAN LIFE (pp. 149-151), West African houses were based conceptually on twelve-foot squares. Jacob Bakeman's house was, in effect, two twelve-foot squares placed side by side to make a whole building, twelve feet by twenty-four feet.

Bakeman sold this house in 1845 to Martin Woodruff, a cooper, and his wife, Hannah. Between 1845 and 1850, they incorporated Bakeman's original structure into the enlarged front part of the house. They also added a back wing of typical Anglo-American dimensions, sixteen feet by thirty-one feet. Round-topped windows in the doors and the bay window on the south side were early Italianate touches in an otherwise Greek Revival home. Charles Rogers, owner of the Titus-Rogers mill in Hannibal, bought this house in the mid-1880s. He remodeled the kitchen and probably added the attached outhouse, the cove siding, and the unusual dentils over the windows. (Information submitted by Judy Wellman).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Ballton (Samuel) Built Home
One of several homes in Greenlawn, NY which were built by Samuel Ballton--ex-slave, farmer, and builder, of Greenlawn, L.I., NY.

Location of Site

34 Taylor Avenue
Greenlawn
NY
11740
Suffolk County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- NO (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Berenice Easton
34 Taylor Ave.
Greenlawn NY 11740

Historical Significance
Excerpt from Death Notice published in the EAGLE.

"Greenlawn, L.I., May 2, 1917--Samuel Ballton, colored, who was born in slavery, and who for many years has been known as the Pickle King of Greenlawn, died at his home Monday night of complications, at the age of 79 years. He received no education, but his ambition spurred him on until he had acquired considerable property and was a successful builder.

Ballton was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia, on January 1, 1838. His mother was a slave owned by Vincent A. Marmaduke. Ballton was one of nine children. While his owner never sold his slaves, he often farmed them out, and Ballton was put to work when he was 7 years of age.

Immediately after the opening of the war Ballton with all the other able-bodied slaves, was hired out as a section hand on the Virginia Central Railroad, and was sent in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

After they had been away from home some time, he, with a number of others escaped. Three days later the runaways came to a Yankee picket and were cared for. He got a job as cook with the Sixth Wisconsin Regiment, at Fredericksburg. Later he went back to the farm, claiming that he had been captured by the Yankees, but he ran away again to Boston, Mass., and enlisted in the Fifth Massachusetts Calvalry and saw considerable service during the war. After he was mustered out, in 1865, he went to Alexandria to live. Later he came to Greenlawn.

He started farming and was so successful in raising pickles that he became well to do. His widow was a slave on a neighboring plantation in Westmoreland County. He married her in 1861.

The funeral services will be held Thursday afternoon, at the Bethel A.M.E. Church. (Information submitted by Greenlawn-Centerport Historical Association).

NOTE: Other homes in Greenlawn that were built by Samuel Ballton include the following: 67 Boulevard Ave.; 3 Smith Street; N.E. Corner of Taylor Ave. & Boulevard Extension; N.E. Corner of Smith & Gaines Streets.

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Bethel A.M.E. Church and Manse

The most important surviving historic resource associated with local Afro-American history in the town of Huntington, New York.

Location of Site

291 Park Avenue
Huntington
NY

Suffolk County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Historical Significance

The Bethel AME Church and Manse complex is historically significant as the most important surviving historic resource associated with local Afro-American history in the town of Huntington. The small 1840s church, although constructed by the local Methodist congregation, has been used by Huntington's Afro-American community since 1860 and survives as the oldest Afro-American church in continuous use in the town. Although somewhat altered, the church and adjacent 1915 manse retain their overall historic appearance. The unpretentious yet locally distinctive religious property recalls the role that Afro-Americans played in the settlement and subsequent growth of the town of Huntington during the 19th and early 20th century.

Based on local secondary research sources, Afro-Americans were living in the town of Huntington during its early settlement (18th century), primarily as slaves on large, landed properties such as Lloyd Manor in the village of Lloyd Harbor. Moreover, Jupiter Hammon, one of America's earliest known Afro-American poets, was born (1711) and lived as a slave on Lloyd Manor. The Lloyds recognized Jupiter's abilities and encouraged his interest in writing poetry.

After the mid-19th century, Huntington's Afro-American population increased in relationship to the area's overall growth, and the town's 1865 census identified a large local black population. Although the Afro-American presence in Huntington during its historic development is not fully documented, the town-wide historic resource inventory identified three properties associated with local Black history: two small, somewhat altered dwellings and the church. As a result of its continual use as a black church, its central role in the spiritual life of its Black community, and its prominent location on a busy street in the village of Huntington, the church has been long recognized as an important historic resource associated with the history of Huntington's Afro-American community. (Exerpt from Building Structure Inventory Form, Division for Historic Preservation New York State Parks and Recreation).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Broderick Park
The area where many fugitive slaves crossed from
Buffalo, N.Y. into Canada.

Location of Site
West Ferry Street at
the Niagara River
Buffalo
NY
14222
Erie County

Classification

Ownership- PU (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- OP (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

City Parks Department Buffalo, New York
City Hall
Buffalo NY 14222

Historical Significance

During the decades before the Civil War, Buffalo was a popular site for fugitive slaves to cross into Canada. Buffalo is separated from Canada by Lake Erie and the Niagara River. The closest points between the two countries are separated by the Niagara River. One means of crossing to Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada from Buffalo was the ferry which was based at the foot of West Ferry Street (at the Niagara River). (See historical atlas of Buffalo, N.Y., 1852). The ferry took passengers to Fort Erie, Canada. Oral history accounts as well as several primary source materials indicate that fugitive slaves frequently used the ferry to get to freedom in Canada.

Today the area where the ferry was based is known as Broderick Park. It is a public park owned by the city of Buffalo. (Information compiled by Monroe Fordham).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Brown (John) Farm
The home and burial place of John Brown the famous 19th century abolitionist.

Location of Site
John Brown Road
Lake Placid
NY

Essex County

Classification

Ownership- PU (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

State of New York

Historical Significance

The John Brown Farm, in North Elba, New York, is a key landmark in the life of John Brown. It is also the place where the famous 19th century abolitionist is buried.

The farm was deeded to Brown by abolitionist leader Gerrit Smith in 1849. Brown lived at the farm for a while but this seclusion was not long-lived. Brown and his sons left the farm to fight in "Bleeding Kansas" in the mid 1850s. In August 1856 Brown and his followers won a victory over a large number of Missourians at Ossawatomie.

For the next few years John Brown seldom came to Elba. He was busily engaged in an anti-slavery crusade which reached a climax with the seisure of the arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Brown was executed December 2, 1859 for his role as leader of this raid.

After his death, John Brown's remains were brought back to the Adirondacks. He was buried some 200 feet east of the farmhouse.

The John Brown Farm is presently operated as a museum and historic site by the New York State Historic Trust. (Excerpt from National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form, prepared by Chester H. Liebs).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Cemetery (Slave)

The slaves buried in this cemetery belonged to a wealthy and prominent local family - the Storm family. The cemetery dates back to the 1700s.

Location of Site

Phillips Road
Hopewell Junction
NY
12533
Dutchess County

Located south side of Phillips Rd., just west of Fishkill Creek in Hopewell Junction.

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Margaret McMillan
Moore Road
Hopewell Junction NY 12533

Historical Significance

This cemetery belonged to the Storm family in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Storm family was a Dutch family that came the the area from Westchester County in the 1700s. The slaves buried in the cemetery belong to different branches of the Storm family. They used a common burial ground for them. The location was recorded by the late Henry Jackson, 9th generation of Storm family, in East Fishkill Bicentennial Commemorative Book. Restoration undertaken by Black community of Poughkeepsie, under direction of East Fishkill Town Historian--Henry Cassidy. (Submitted and compiled by Mr. Henry Cassidy, East Fishkill Town Historian).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Cemetery for Colored Inhabitants of 19th Century Rye, NY.
Established in 1860 as a cemetery for black residents
of Rye town and Black Civil War Veterans.

Location of Site

Rye
NY
10580
Westchester County
Located in or adjacent to Greenwood Union Cemetery,
Rye, New York.

Classification

Ownership- PU (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- LR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register,
LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- OP (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Historical Significance

The land for the "Colored inhabitants" cemetery was donated by Elizabeth and Underhill Halstead in 1860 for use as a cemetery for black residents of Rye town and black Civil War veterans. It was donated to the Rye Town Trustees "and their successors in office forever" for use as a "cemetery or burial ground for the colored inhabitants." In 1942 when what was the Village of Rye became a city, this piece of land was omitted from the list of properties transferred from the Town of Rye to the City of Rye. Since it was in the City of Rye borders, the Town of Rye thought the City of Rye would maintain it. Somehow it was forgotten.

In 1981 the local newspaper took up the cause of this neglected cemetery. It was cleaned up to some degree by volunteers, but there is still some argument as to which local government (the City of Rye or Town of Rye) is responsible for its upkeep.

In 1986 it received an historic marker from the Westchester Tricentennial Commission. It has been cleaned up considerably. However, it still is not really a great looking cemetery in comparison to its next-door neighbor, Greenwood Union Cemetery.
(Compiled and submitted by Susan A. Morison).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
The oldest surviving church associated with Buffalo, New York A.M.E. Zion congregations.

Location of Site

174 East Eagle Street
Buffalo
NY

Erie County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
174 Eagle Street
Buffalo NY

Historical Significance

Durham A.M.E. Zion Church (formerly a part of the St. Luke's A.M.E. Zion Congregation) is the oldest surviving church associated with Buffalo A.M.E. Zion congretations. The St. Lukes congregation, founded in 1906, played an important role in the black community as a focal point of the educational, social, political and religious activities of unskilled southern blacks who had migrated north at the turn of the century in search of industrial employment.

The congregation of the St. Luke's A.M.E. Zion Church originated from the first black congregation organized in Buffalo, that of the Bethel A.M.E. Church, which was organized in Buffalo in 1831. In 1901 some of the Bethel A.M.E. Church, dissatisfied with the church's locale and the removal of their pastor, withdrew from that congregation and organized the People's Reformed Methodist Church. Services were held at 149 Clinton Street. In 1906 they united with the A.M.E. Zion Conference and formally changed their name to St. Luke's A.M.E. Zion Church.

In the years prior to World War I, when southern blacks were migrating to the northern cities and villages, the black church played an important role in the acculturation process. St. Luke's helped rural blacks adapt to urban life. As a social and cultural center it strengthened the sense of community and family amongst the struggling minority. Educational programs, including a particularly noteworthy employment training school for black youth, were organized to meet the community's needs. Classes were taught in domestic duties, the field most accessible to blacks at the turn of the century.

An expansion of the congregation in the late 1950s caused the members to relocate to a larger existing structure on Ferry Street. A loyal few chose to remain in the historic structure and permission was granted by the bishop of their conference to form a separate congregation. The members who chose to remain the original building took the name Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, in honor of the pastor who oversaw the building program in 1922.

The Church building occupied by the Durham Memorial congregation was constructed in the early 1920s. (During the years prior to its completion, services were held at 585 Michigan Street. The 149 Clinton Street address was used only during the few early years that the congregation was known as the People's Reformed Methodist Church). By 1920 the black population, having increased-rapidly with Buffalo's industrial expansion during World War I, exceeded 5,000. The cornerstone of the new church was laid in 1920 and construction was completed two years later during the service of Reverend Henry Durham. St. Luke's became Buffalo's first black congregation to build its own place of worship; previously, black congregations traditionally occupied existing structures. The cost of construction, $50,000 was partially subsidized by wealthy Buffalonians, many of whom were the employers of the residents of the community. The remainder was financed by a mortgage on which payment was made for the next twenty-two years.

St. Luke's remained an important center of the black community during the "prosperous twenties"; during the Great Depression it was a focal point of community activity as it administered the social programs funded by the W.P.A.. The historically significant Durham Memorial remains a local landmark to the pride and accomplishments of Buffalo' Afro-American population, not only as a house of worship but as a social and cultural center as well. (Excerpt from National Register

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Ellington, Edward Kennedy "Duke" Residence
Residence of "Duke" Ellington, one of America's most important composers as well as its most influential jazz musicians.

Location of Site
935 St. Nicholas Ave./Apt. 4A
New York
NY

New York County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NL (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

St. Nicholas Realty Company
935 St. Nicholas Avenue
New York NY

Historical Significance

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington was one of America's most important composers as well as its most influential jazz musicians. His career spanned more than a half-century and his reputation was not only in jazz, which he legitimized as a serious form of music, but in popular, classical and sacred music. Mr. Ellington's compositions totaled more than 1,500 pieces and he applied his talents to music for jazz groups, symphony orchestras, the theater, films, television, ballet and opera.

Ellington's contributions went beyond "Tin Pan Alley" successes. As a composer and orchestrator, he earned the respect of classically trained musicians like composer A. Gunther Schuller, president of the New England Conservatory of Music, who called him "one of America's greatest composers" and ranked him with Stravinsky, Ravel and Villa-Lobos as an important music figure of the twentieth century.

The Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington Residence is located at the corner of St. Nicholas and W. 157th Street, New York City. The building sits flush against another apartment building to the west. The property is bounded on the north by St. Nicholas Avenue, on the east by W. 157th Street, and on the south by an access alleyway. (Excerpt from National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form, prepared by Lynne Gomez Graves).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

First Presbyterian Church of Whitesboro
The Church was closely associated with the early 19th century antislavery movement. Abolitionist Beriah Green was an occassional pulpit speaker at the church.

Location of Site

Main Street
Whitesboro
NY
13492
Oneida County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

First Presbyterian Church
Main Street
Whitesboro NY 13492

Historical Significance

The First Presbyterian Church of Whitesboro was closely associated with the early 19th century anti-slavery movement. The church was the scene of many of the events that were central to the revivalist reform movement that gave birth to militant and radical abolitionism. Many of the leaders of the anti-slavery movement like Charles Grandison Finney, Theodore Dwight Weld, Gerrit Smith, Beriah Green and others met and spoke in the church. Beriah Green, one of the more radical abolitionists and head of Oneida Institute, was an occassional pulpit speaker at the First Presbyterian Church of Whitesboro.

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Foster Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
The oldest Black church in continuous use in Westchester County. Built by free Blacks in 1865.

Location of Site

90 Wildey Street
Tarrytown
NY

Westchester County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Foster A.M.E. Zion Church
90 Wildey
Tarrytown NY

Historical Significance

Foster Memorial is the oldest continuously occupied black church in Westchester County. It was built by free blacks in 1865. Its congregation played an active role in the underground railroad , and provided an important social link for the Afro-American community in Tarrytown in the 19th and early 20th century. The building is closely associated with Mrs. Amanda Foster, "Mother of the Church," who was instrumental in the development of the A.N.E. Zion Church in Tarrytown, and whose memory continues to be honored by present-day church members.

In 1790 there were 357 "free colored persons" reported in Westchester County, many of them farmhands and house servants. The free black population increased during the early 19th century through manumissions and children born to free black parents.

In 1860, an A.M.E. Zion congregation was organized in Tarrytown. At that time there were 178 free blacks in the town of Greenburgh. The Tarrytown congregation was established to service the growing black population of the area, aid the freedmen who might migrate into the village, and help runaway slaves. The congregation was organized by Henry and Amanda Foster, members of the White Plains congregation; Rev. Jacob Thomas, a future leader in the New York Conference; and Hiram Jimmerson, a friend of the Fosters.

The Tarrytown congregation, comprised at first of the four founders and three additional members, moved through a number of temporary quarters between 1860 and 1864. As the membership grew, the group moved from Mrs. Foster's store to rented rooms over O'Dell's store at the southwest corner of Main and Washington streets, and then to the G. and D. Silver Shoe Factory on N. Washington Street. With the aid of four white members of local Dutch Reformed and Methodist congregations, the Fosters and Rev. Thomas formed a committee to build a church. Funds were solicited throughout the community, and the present site on Wildey Street was purchased. James Bird, a local builder-architect, erected the brick church at a cost of $9,120. The cornerstone was laid on October 10, 1864.

The deathbed wish of Henry Foster, who died six months after the cornerstone laying, was for his wife to continue to build the church. During the early years the church attracted local blacks and some whites who had previously worshipped in other Tarrytown churches. By 1886, the congregation included 40 members and 35 Sunday School students.

In a small community such as Tarrytown, where blacks were frequently discouraged from social interaction with whites, social and religious life centered around the church. Suppers, recitals, lectures, plays, teas, and other events were held in the church basement. In the years following WW I when massive numbers of southern blacks migrated to the cities and villages of the north, the black church played an important role in the process of southern black adjustment in northern communities.

Foster Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church survives as an important link between the 19th and 20 century histories of Westchester County's African American community. (Excerpt from National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form, prepared by Karen Morey Kennedy).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Guinea Woods *(See also Westbury A.M.E. Zion Church)
A community of freed slaves founded by the Quakers in last quarter of the 18th century (1770s).

Location of Site

Old Westbury
NY
11568
Nassau County

Located along Glen Cove Rd., between I.U. Willets Rd. and Long Island Expressway.

Classification

Ownership- (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Historical Significance

Around 1776 the Quaker slaveholders living in North Hempstead, L.I., freed their slaves. In a clearing surrounded by oaks and birches, not far from what is now the convergence of the Long Island Expressway and Glen Cove Road, the Quakers set up a school and a church for the former slaves who settled in the enclave.

According to historical accounts, the freed slaves named the community "Guinea Town," a reference to their ancestral origins on the Guinea Coast of Africa. (To this day the 2 1/2 mile stretch of Glen Cove Road that goes through Old Westbury is called Guinea Woods Road).

The name "Guinea" first appears in reference to the settlement in 1793, according to Richard Gachot, an Old Westbury Village historian, whose research is well known and respected by Long Island Authorities.

"In the late 1800s, in Southampton, freed slaves formed a village called Freetown. But the church and school in the Old Westbury clearing (Guinea Town) was more like a community center for the former slaves. It became a locus for the freed blacks, a place not only where parents and children could learn to read and write, but where families could get together.

The Quaker Society of Westbury and Jericho sent men to teach the negroes to read and write . . . and provided shoes for the children so they could go to school,' said Esther Emory, a descendant of one of the Quakers who released the 155 slaves.

And the effort made a difference. By 1834--barely a generation after the community's inception--its freed slaves had gained enough confidence and sophistication to formally, though amicably, break from their quaker benefactors. A young Quaker leader named Isaac Hicks helped Eliakim Levi, a child of one of the freed slaves and a farmer for Hicks mother, Sarah, drew up the organization papers for the New Light Baptist Church, which later moved from Old Westbury to Westbury and became the AME Zion Church that stands at the center of the black community on Grand Boulevard in Westbury." (Excerpt from Lawrence C. Levy, "A Halfway House on the Way to Freedom," NEWSDAY,12/10/80. Historical materials submitted by Jean Renison, Historical Society of the Westburys).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Highgate (Edmonia) Burial Site
Edmonia Highgate was a talented young black woman who left Syracuse, NY, and went South following the Emancipation Proclamation to teach the newly freed slaves.

Location of Site
Oakwood Cemetery
Section 6
Syracuse
NY

Onondaga County

Classification

Ownership- PU (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- OP (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Oakwood - Morningside Cemetery Association

Syracuse NY

Historical Significance

Edmonia Highgate was a talented young black woman who went South following the Emancipation Proclamation to teach the newly freed slaves. Educated in Syracuse in the 1860s, Edmonia graduated with honors from a local high school, but was not permitted to teach because of her race. She travelled to other cities where she could find an outlet for her talents, eventually going South to Virginia, Mississippi and New Orleans as part of a movement of women dedicated to civil rights & black education.

When she was 21 years old, she became the principal of the Frederick Douglass School in New Orleans which had been converted from a former slave pen. Eight hundred students who had been denied the right to learn to read and write were educated there in spite of the poor conditions.

She became the only woman officer of the Louisiana Education Relief Association, an organization supporting integrated public education. Edmonia refused to teach in the segregated public schools of New Orleans. Upon resigning, she gave up a substantial annual salary of $1,000 and said she would "rather starve than stoop one inch on that question." In rural Louisiana, hostile whites shot at her but missed, shot and injured her students, and threatened to burn her school to the ground.

Edmonia's work was extremely taxing and caused her to come back to Syracuse to rest and recuperate from exhaustion. On one such occasion, she addressed the National Convention of Colored Men, an organization of black leaders, that was holding its convention in Syracuse.... Edmonia was the second woman ever to address the convention which consisted solely of male delegates. Her remarks on the impoverished conditions of the newly freed slaves drew great acclaim from Rev. Jermain Loguen, Syracuse's underground railroad leader and militant abolitionist. While in Upatate New York, she travelled from town to town lecturing on conditions in the South and fundraising for freed people's relief before returning to the South.

In 1869, when she was 26 years old, she returned to Syracuse for the last time. She had fallen in love with a married white man, became pregnant, and died of poisoning in an attempt to induce abortion, penniless and alone. There was a pawn ticket in her purse for her trunk and contents worth $16.55.

Until recently her remains lay in an unmarked grave in Syracuse's Oakwood Cemetery. The grave, which now has a headstone, is located in Section 6 of Oakwood Cemetery, jut south of the Syracuse University campus, entrance off Comstock Ave.; grave is within sight of the Jermain Loguen grave in one of the oldest parts of the cemetery.

(Excerpt from a packet of promotional material submitted by Dr. Milton Sernett).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Hills, The
A rural, free Black community in Westchester County, existing from the 1780s to 1935.

Location of Site

Harrison, N. Castle.
NY

Westchester County
Terrain north of Silver Lake, where Harrison, North Castle, & White Plains meet.

Classification

Ownership- (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- LR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- OP (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Westchester County Dept. of Parks, Recreation, & Conserv.

County Office Bldg.
White Plains NY 10604

Historical Significance

From 1780 through 1935, African American history and culture thrived in "The Hills." The rural, free Black comunity was founded in the late 1700s, upon the decision of the Purchase Meeting of the Society of Friends to free their slaves and give them land on which to settle. The settlement attracted other freed Blacks, organized the Asbury Colored People's Church of Harrison and established a school and cemetery.

During the pre-Civil War era, the "underground railroad" was operating in this area of Westchester County--supported by the Quakers, and Methodist-Episcopals and the Black churches and settlements. Twenty-five men from The Hills fought in Black regiments in the Civil War. One Black soldier, Sergeant Simeon Anderson Tierce, left a record of his military experience and community news in his five letters to his wife in "The Hills," preserved in her widow's pension file in the National Archives.

The community demonstrated family stability in nuclear and extended family patterns with a majority of male heads of households, and family continuity, with surnames from blacks freed by colonial slave-owning families carried through by twentieth century residents. The households are well documented on maps and in the federal census manuscripts. The Hills maintained its cultural vitality in its rugged, isolated environment. The same environment remains undeveloped today, preserving dwelling foundations on county park land and private property.

The history of The Hills is preserved in the archives, in the archaeology, potentially in oral histories, and in the membership and mission of Mount Hope A.M.E. Zion Church in White Plains, the direct descendant of the church in The Hills. Located just a few miles from downtown White Plains in mid-Westchester County, the settlement offers the black community a significant model of local African American history.

Research on this Black community offers the possibility of establishing ties between The Hills and other Black settlements, such as Skunk Hollow in Rockland County, Sandy Ground in Staten Island, Weeksville, Freemanville in Dutchess County, among others.

In 1983, Stony Hill, the area of The Hills in Harrison, was designated one of 60 Tricentennial Historical Sites throughout Westchester County. (Compiled and submitted by Edythe Quinn Caro).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Hughes (Langston) House
Former residence of Langston Hughes--author and poet
and one of the foremost figures of the Harlem Renaissance.

2 Location of Site
20 East 127th Street
New York
NY

New York County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register,
LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

J. Emerson Harper
4000 Massachusetts Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Historical Significance

This house is historically significant as the home of Langston Hughes, author and poet and one of the foremost figures of the Harlem Renaissance, a literary movement of the 1920s and 1930s that focused on the question of Negro identity. A modest brownstone rowhouse, built in 1869, it was designed in the Italianate style by architect Alexander Wilson. Built by two real estate developers, James Meagher and Thomas Hanson, it is typical of rowhouses built in Harlem during the period after the Civil War. Hughes lived in the house for the last twenty years of his life and regarded it as his home. As the only residence he lived in for any length of time, it is the most tangible symbol of his association with Harlem. (Excerpt from National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form, prepared by Majorie Pearson).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Lakeville A.M.E. Zion Church

One of the structures in the "Valley Road Historic District," the Church was built by free Blacks and Indians in 1832.

Location of Site

Community Drive
Manhasset
NY
11030
Nassau County

Classification

Ownership- (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Historical Significance

The Lakeville A.M.E. Church was founded in 1832 and was located in the Afro-American community called "Success." (See Valley Road Historic District for more information on "Success").

The church was built on land that George Treadwell sold to a religious society made up of Black and Indian residents of "Success." This group became the founding trustees of the Lakeville A.M.E. Zion Church. The church was built by the members themselves. The cemetery adjoining the church contains the graves of many former slaves and may be one of the oldest cemeteries on Long Island.

Institution USA was a free colored school built by the "Success" community in 1867, when Blacks and Indians were barred from Nassau and Suffolk schools. The church sponsored a fair and raised $267 to build the school next to the church. When the public schools were integrated in 1909, the school was abandoned. It was later used as a Republican clubhouse, but it was eventually torn down. This may have been the first free colored school in Nassau County. (Information submitted by Florine Polner).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Lloyd Manor House (residence of slave poet Jupiter Hammon).
Residence of Henry Lloyd, slavemaster to early
Afro-American poet, Jupiter Hammon.

Location of Site

Huntington
NY

County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register,
LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- OP (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Historical Significance

Jupiter Hammon, an early Afro-American poet, was a slave to the merchant Henry Lloyd, lord of the Manor of Queen's Village, now Lloyd neck in Huntington, Long Island. Upon Lloyd's death in 1763, Hammon became the property of Joseph Lloyd, an American patriot who moved to Hartford during the Revolution. Upon Joseph's death in 1780, Hammon returned to Lloyd Neck, as a slave to Joseph's grandson, John Lloyd, a British sympathizer.

Hammon was taught to read in the Queen's Village school and was allowed to use his master's library. He was a trusted servant and given much encouragement to learn. With the publication on Christmas Day, 1760, of the 88 line broadside poem "An Evening Thought," Hammon, then 49, became the first black in America to publish poetry. Two of Hammon's "sermons" were published in 1782 and 1783.

At the age of 75 Jupiter Hammon wrote "An Address to the Negroes in the State of New York". In it he pictures a Heaven in which blacks and whites are judged as equals. He points out the irony of the American Revolution in which the white people are so concerned with defending their own liberty, yet ignore that of the blacks. His desire that younger blacks might be freed is thought to have resulted in New York State's law of 1799 which freed younger slaves. His address was later reprinted and distributed by the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery.

(Information submitted by Stanley A. Ransom).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Loguen, (Jermain) Gravesite
Rev. Jermain Loguen was an African-American abolitionist and reformer from Syracuse, New York.

Location of Site
Oakwood Cemetery
Section 6
Syracuse
NY
13244
Onondaga County

Classification

Ownership- PU (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- OP (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Oakwood - Morningside Cemetery Association

Syracuse NY 13244

Historical Significance

Rev. Jermain Wesley Loguen was prominent in Upstate New York reform movements, especially in Syracuse. Though a fugitive himself, Loguen felt "bound to Syracuse" and was instrumental, as Superintendent (or General Agent) of the Underground Railroad, in making Syracuse an "open city". A biography of Loguen appeared in 1859 with the title THE REV. J.W. LOGUEN, AS A SLAVE AND AS A FREEMEN.

Loguen's grave is located in Section 6, Oakwood Cemetery in Syracuse, New York.

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

McGrawville, New York Central College in

N.Y. Central College in McGrawville (1848-1858) was one of the few ante-bellum colleges that admitted Afro-Americans, Indians, and whites.

Location of Site

site of McGraw Central School
McGrawville
NY
13101
Cortland County

Classification

Ownership- (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Historical Significance

Once in McGrawville, N.Y., there was a college which admitted Negroes, Indians, and whites from all over the country. In 1848 that was an unusual admissions policy.

The American Free Will Baptist Church founded the college in McGrawville. The Free Will church was a wing of the American Baptist church which had probably dissociated itself because the mother church would not support abolition. They chose McGrawville...because it was directly on the underground railroad route for transporting runaway slaves to Oswego and thence to Canada.

New York Central Free College opened in 1848, but so many students arrived from all over the country that by 1850 the word "free" had to be deleted from the title. The college began to charge $30 a year tuition, on a work-study program for students and faculty. It paid three cents an hour to women students, and six cents an hour to men. Room fees averaged $3 a week; board was one dollar.

New York Central College asked for money from every available source.... Contemporary abolitionists and philanthropists who were eager to see equal education be successful contributed to the school--William Lloyd Garrison, Theodore Parker and Horace Greeley.

The most important donation came from Gerrit Smith, philanthropist, who bought thousands of acres in Central New York and gave pieces of the property to Negroes so that, as property owners, they could vote in New York. He subsidized the college with $6,500 at one point, and various sums after that.

What kind of education did the tiny college offer to its diverse student body.... New York Central College taught the classics--rhetoric, logic, Latin, Greek--.... But it also offered chemistry, botany and languages in an effort to provide a broad education.

Despite financial aid and work-study programs, New York Central College closed, bankrupt, in 1858.... The building no longer stands, McGraw Central School presently stands on the site where the college once stood. (Excerpt from a news article by Marian P. Shearer).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Michigan Street Baptist Church

Building once occupied by an early 19th century black congregation. Founded in the 1830s, the Michigan Street congregation occupied the church for some 125 years.

Location of Site

511 Michigan Avenue
Buffalo
NY

Erie County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

El Bethel
511 Michigan Avenue
Buffalo NY

Historical Significance

The Michigan Street Baptist Church was founded during the early 1830s. The congregation moved into the building at 511 Michigan Street around 1845. For some 125 years the church played a central role in the history of Buffalo's African America Community. (The building is now occupied by another congregation).

An abolitionist undertone is evident in the newspaper article of February 28, 1846 announcing the opening of the newly constructed Michigan Street Baptist Church to which "all friendly to the [anti-slavery?] cause are particularly requested to attend. Many of its early members were said to have been active in the abolitionist movement.

On the day of the ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870 granting Afro-Americans the right to vote, a celebration procession is said to have gathered at the steps of the Church and marched through the city street winding up with a festive dinner at St. James Hall.

At the turn of the century two compelling community figures became associated with the Michigan Street Church and contributed greatly to the politicization of Buffalo's Blacks. The first was the Rev. Dr. J. Edward Nash (1868-1957) who became pastor of the church in the 1890s and remained there for 61 years. During that time he was involved in the founding of the Buffalo Urban League and the local branch of the NAACP. In 1953 Potter Street behind the church was renamed Nash Street in his honor, and the National Conference of Christians and Jews presented Rev. Nash its annual Brotherhood Award in the field of human relations.

The second prominent figure associated with the Michigan Street Church was Mary B. Talbert, a neighbor and an active parishioner. Her home was at 521 Michigan Street, two doors away from the church. According to the BUFFALO ENQUIRER, July 12,1905,

"Colored men from eighteen different states held a national conference at No. 521 Michigan Street yesterday, adopting resolutions looking forward to the betterment of the race and the abolition of all caste distinctions based simply on race and color. It was called the 'Niagara Movement.' Prof. W.E.B. DuBois of Atlanta, Georgia, author of THE SOULS OF BLACK MEN, prepared the principles of the movement." The delegates apparently met in several places in the course of the week including the Buffalo home of Mrs. Anna Lee and the Fort Erie Beach Hotel across the river in Ft. Erie Canada which W.E.B. DuBois refers to in his autobiography.

The red brick building which housed the Michigan Street Baptist Congregation still stands as the only existing structure with historic roots to the pre-Civil War Afro-American community. (Excerpt from the National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, prepared by Cornelia E. Brooke).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Minton's Playhouse

Minton's Playhouse, located in Harlem, is significant in the history of American music for its pivotal role in the development of jazz during the 1940s.

Location of Site

206-210 West 118th Street
New York
NY

New York County

Classification

Ownership- PU (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- UN (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

N.Y.C. Dept. of Housing Preservation & Development
100 Gold Street
New York NY

Historical Significance

"Minton's Playhouse, located on the ground floor of the Cecil Hotel in Harlem, is significant in the history of American music for its pivotal role in the development of jazz during the 1940s. Recognized by musicians and historians as one of the foremost jam session nightclubs in the United States, Minton's is famed especially as the principal site of the formal and informal experimentations during the 1940s that led to the "bebop revolution," a fundamental transformation of the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic basis of jazz composition and improvisation that ushered in a distinctly sophisticated and virtuosic approach to jazz music."

"This complex approach, the dominant new jazz style of the 1940s and early 1950 throughout the country, remains a key element of contemporary jazz....The bebop revolution, fostered at Minton's, also is especially significant as a turning point in the recognition of jazz as a sophisticated art form; with the advent of this style, for the first time jazz musicians were widely perceived in this country as serious artists as well as entertainers." (Excerpt from National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, prepared by Merrill Hesch).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Mount Moor Cemetery
Oldest Afro-American cemetery in Rockland County.
Grave sites date back to pre-Civil War.

Location of Site

Town of Clarkstown
West Nyack
NY
10994
Rockland County

Burial grounds for "coloured" people located on the eastern slope of Mount Moor Cemetery.

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- OP (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Mt. Moor Cemetery Association
c/o 100 N. Franklin St.
Nyack NY 10960

Historical Significance

Original burial grounds were purchased by a small Black group in 1849. Additional area for expansion was purchased in 1855. Many Black veterans of the Civil War, Spanish-American , and other wars are buried there. It is the oldest known Black cemetery in Rockland County. (Compiled and submitted by Mr. Hezekiah H. Easter).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Old Fort House Museum
Was once the residence of well known free Black--
Solomon Northup, author of TWELVE YEARS A SLAVE.

Location of Site
29 Lower Broadway
Fort Edward
NY
12828
Washington County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- OP (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Fort Edward Historical Assoc.
Box 106
Fort Edward NY 12828

Historical Significance

The historic building which houses the Old Fort House Museum was at one time the residence of Solomon Northup. Northup was a free black who was kidnapped and sold into slavery--where he spent twelve years. After gaining his freedom in 1853, Northup wrote a book, TWELVE YEARS A SLAVE, which rivaled the popularity of Harriet Beecher Stowe's, UNCLE TOM'S CABIN.

Northup apparently leased the house from its owner in 1829, and moved into the "old yellow building" with his new bride Anne Hampton. During the winter Northup was employed with others repairing the Champlain Canal. With his savings he was able to purchase a pair of horses and other things necessary for towing. Northup took on several contracts for the transportation of large rafts of timber from Lake Champlain to Troy. Northup continued in this endeavor until the spring of 1832 when he and his wife decided to purchase a farm in Kingsbury. Ten years later Northup was kidnapped and sold into slavery. His father Mintus Northup had been officially declared a free man by an act of the Fort Edward Town Board in 1821. Upon his rescue in 1853, Northup wrote TWELVE YEARS A SLAVE. The Northup book has been reprinted and is on sale at the "Old Fort House Museum." (Historical materials were supplied by R. Paul McCarty).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Oneida Institute
Founded in 1827, and associated with radical abolitionism, Oneida Institute became one of the first colleges to admit Blacks. Alumni included Henry Highland Garnet.

Location of Site

Whitesboro
NY

Oneida County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Historical Significance

For a decade, from 1833 to 1843, Oneida Institute served as a center of abolitionist activity and as a radical experiment in interracial education. Founded in 1827 under Presbyterian auspices by the Reverend George Gale and chartered in 1829 as the Oneida Institute of Science and Industry, the school occupied approximately 115 acres about four miles west of Utica, near the Village of Whitesboro. In the aftermath of the religious awakenings fostered by the great revivalist of the Burned-over District, Charles Grandison Finney, young men sought out Gale's school in prepararion for the evangelical ministry. They combined academic study with manual labor on the school's farm and in its various shops.

In 1833, Beriah Green, fresh from a controversy over William Lloyd Garrison's call for immediate emancipation at Western Reserve College, became president of Oneida Institute. He quickly radicalized the school by successfully transforming it into a training ground for youthful abolitionists and by demanding the admission of Afro-Americans. Henry Highland Garnet, Alexander Crummell, Jermain Loguen, Amos G. Beman, andWilliam G. Allen are among Oneida's alumni. Oneida Institute thus deserves "first honor" in admitting more Afro-Americans than any other college during the 1830s and early 1840s. Alexander Crummell recalled "3 years of perfect equality with upwards of 100 white students, or different denominations at Oneida Institute."

Green's efforts to form a model community in which blacks would be in every respect the equal of whites and in which students and faculty had abolitionist sympathies angered many of Oneida Institute supporters. His curricular reforms, which emphasized a practical education for social reform, lost him the support of the educational societies, and his disenchantment with orthodox theologians who failed to support radical abolitionism led him to break away from the established churches. Green and many of his students eventually became active in the Liberty Party. By the mid-1840s, Oneida Institute was in desparate financial straits. It was sold to the Free Will Baptists in 1844 and became a co-educational institution known as Whitestown Seminary. The Baptist institution lasted until 1884. Its buildings were later modified for a textile factory. In more recent years, a large funeral home has been built in front of the site where scores of young men under Beriah Green once worked and studied on behalf of a better America.

Information submitted by Dr. Milton Sernett.

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Orson Ames House
Jerry the slave (of the well known "Jerry Rescue"),
was said to have been hidden in this house for one night in
October, 1851.

Location of Site

5800 W. Main Street
Mexico
NY
13114
Oswego County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- NO (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Jacqueline Lortie
5800 W. Main St.
Mexico NY 13114

Historical Significance

The Greek Revival home across from the Mexico Academy and Central School building (5800 West Main Street) was the home of Orson Ames and played a key role in hiding Jerry, the fugitive slave, in 1851.

Orson Ames was known as "a decided and zealous abolitionist" and "a man of much influence" in Mexico. He was born in Connecticut in 1799 and moved with his parents (Leonard and Minerva Ames) to Mexico about 1804. By 1826 he was operating a sawmill on Black Creek and made scythes and axes. He was considered one of the wealthiest of the Mexico abolitionists.

Orson Ames, along with eight others signed all three anti-slavery petitions sent from Mexico to the U.S. Congress. Petitions were sent in 1835, 1837 and 1845. He served on the executive committee of the Oswego County Anti-Slavery Society. Mr. Ames is best remembered for guarding Jerry on his first night in Mexico.

Orson Ames suffered a paralyzing stroke in 1861 that limited his career. He died on February 16, 1867. (Information taken from booklet, RAILROAD TO FREEDOM: ABOLITIONISTS IN MEXICO, NEW YORK. Material submitted by Mr. Euloda Fetcha).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Park Church
Congregation was organized in Elmira in 1846 and was known for its strong opposition to slavery. Was pastored by Thomas Beecher from 1854-1900.

Location of Site

208 West Gray Street
Elmira
NY

Chemung County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Park Church
208 West Gray Street
Elmira NY

Historical Significance

The church was organized as the First Independent Congregational Church of Elmira in 1846 by local Presbyterians who opposed slavery. The first few meetings of the group were held in a rented hall. By 1854, when Thomas Kennicutt Beecher (1824-1900) became pastor, a small white frame church had been erected on the northern portion of the present church property.

One of the thirteen children of Lyman Beecher (1775-1863), the noted reforming clergyman, Thomas Beecher served as pastor of the Park Church until his death in 1900. The present structure was built in 1874-1876 and is one of the many upstate buildings designed by the Syracuse-based architect Horatio Nelson White. The church is historically significant not only for its unusual eclectic design, but also for its congregation's strong abolitionist philosophy and their concern with humanitarian causes. (Excerpt from National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form, prepared by Margaret L. Nadler).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Robeson (Paul) Residence
Former residence of Paul Robeson--one of the most talented Afro-American actors and singers of the 20th century.

Location of Site
555 Edgecombe Avenue
New York
NY

New York County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NL (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Burton Goldberg
24 Griffin Avenue
Scarsdale NY

Historical Significance

Paul Robeson was one of the most outstanding Afro-Americans of the 20th century. Excelling in numerous talents and skills, Robeson graced stages throughout the world for more than twenty years. In 1926 he was selected actor of the year for his memorable and classic title role in OTHELLO. His deep baritone voice immortalized such songs as "Ole Man River" from the Broadway Musical SHOWBOAT. He was a member of the famous Provincetown Players in Massachusetts becoming a close friend and admirer of the famous playwrite Eugene O'Neill.

Brought up by a father who demanded excellence, Robeson achieved a distinguished college career. A brilliant Phi Beta Kappa student at Rutgers University in New Jersey, he was also chosen All-American in 1917 and 1918 for his football skill, was student commencement speaker and was one of four seniors selected for the distinguished Cap and Skull Society.

Robeson's increasing refusal to remain silent about American racism and his ardent desire for full human justice resulted in his ostracism from American Society during the forties and fifties and also led to a slow but persistent destruction of his career in this country. His death in 1976 marked the loss of one of the world's greatest concert artists, stage and screen actors, athletes and scholars. It also meant the loss of a valuable humanitarian whose courage and determination to speak the truth and to stand up for what he believed in remains a lasting legacy for all free men. (Excerpt from National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form, prepared by Lynne Gomez-Graves).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Robinson ("Jackie") Residence
Residence of Jackie Robinson, the first Afro-American to play major league baseball.

Location of Site
5224 Tilden Street
Brooklyn
NY

Kings County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NL (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Christopher Palen
5224 Tilden Street
Brooklyn NY

Historical Significance

The years 1945 -1947 were milestones in the history of Afro-American participation in American sports. John Roosevelt "Jackie" Robinson was afforded the opportunity to be the man instrumental in "breaking through the color barrier" in Major League Baseball when the Brooklyn Dodgers signed him to their minor league team, the Montreal Royals in 1945, and then to the major league Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. It was not a question of the athletic skills of Afro-Americans, but that prior to 1945 the talents of blacks in American sports had been hidden or ignored. With the careful guidance and determined path set by Branch Rickey, president of the Brooklyn Dodgers, Jackie Robinson became the "first Negro ever to play organized baseball in modern times."

The John Roosevelt "Jackie" Robinson Residence at 5224 Tilden Avenue is a two-family, semi-detached tapestry brick dwelling. The structure was constructed between 1912 and 1916. It is an English Medieval building with Wenham hall type roof line and has colonial type double hung windows. (Excerpt from National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form, prepared by Lynne Gomez Graves).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Salem A.M.E. Church
Oldest surviving continuously operating church in
Roslyn Heights, NY.

Location of Site

109 Roslyn Rd.
Roslyn Heights
NY
11577
Nassau County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register,
LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Salem A.M.E Church
109 Roslyn Rd.
Roslyn Heights NY

Historical Significance

Excerpt from "History of Queens County, New York," Munsell, W.W., and Company: 1882, p. 425.

"This society was formed in the year 1821, with Rev. William Carmen as pastor. Moses Coss, Jacob Mastias, Henry Chappell and others were the worshippers. They then met at the house of Moses Coss, at Little Neck, and in 1829 moved this place of meeting to his new house at Success. In 1833 the Society bought land and erected a frame building convenient for worship. At that time a number of members were added, increasing the membership to 35. William Carmen was still pastor, but soon died, and was succeeded by his assistant, George Treadwell."

(Compiled and submitted by Roger G. Gerry, D.M.D.).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Sandy Ground Historic Archeological District
Sandy Ground was one of the small Afro-American Communities in the New York City area that were formed by free blacks during the ante-bellum period.

Location of Site

Rossville
NY

Richmond County
Vicinity of the Bloomingdale Rd. & Woodrow Rd. Intersection

Classification

Ownership- (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Historical Significance

Historically, Sandy Ground is one of the small number of Black American communities in the New York City area that were formed by free Blacks during the Ante-Bellum period. The general history of Sandy Ground has been outlined in the following publications: [Joseph Mitchell, "Mr. Hunter's Grave," NEW YORKER, September 22, 1956, pp.50-95; and Minna Wilkins, "Sandy Ground: A Tiny Racial Island," THE STATEN ISLAND HISTORIAN 6(1), 1943:1-3, 7 and 6(4), 1943:25-26, 31-32. Staten Island Historical Society].

The community had its origins in the first half of the 19th century when it coalesced from several sources: free Blacks from the Chesapeake Bay area of Maryland, Delaware and Virginia. It is this last group of Black oystermen who became the most distinctive component of the community and dominated it socially for the rest of the century.

In the years which preceded the Civil War, states with slavery enacted repressive laws to encumber free Black entrepreneurs. Targets of this campaign were free Blacks who had become successful in the oystering industry focused on Chesapeake Bay. In response to these restrictions, a planned migration of Black families occurred in the 1840s and 1850s. The original families were joined by several local Black families to form the community of Sandy Ground.

In 1850 the Sandy Ground free Blacks founded the A.M.E. Zion Church. Its first wood frame structure "seating about 150 persons" was completed in 1854. The original membership list is the first evidence of a socially coherent community. The church became the focus for Black social life on Staten Island. Its membership lists always included many who lived outside Sandy Ground. The church became well known for holding ox roasts and clam bakes which attracted as many as several hundred people. In 1875, church membership split over a disagreement with the regional conference. In 1898, the combined membership of the A.M.E. Zion and Mount Zion African Methodist churches was 99 adults and about 150 children.

The economic state of the original families is not clear from either the few historical records or from oral history. However, within a few decades of their arrival, the oystering families had grown prosperous. Support services for the oystering industry as well as for the community at large also developed. Among these service industries were several blacksmiths who forged the hardware for oystering. Other members of the community worked as farmers, some specializing in strawberries which grow well in the sandy soil for which the area is named.

For the most part, Sandy Ground's twentieth-century economy has been one of decline. The prosperity of the community ended in 1916 when the Board of Health condemned the oyster beds as sources of typhoid and other diseases. Some families moved away; most tried to find new jobs in local factories and businesses. (Excerpt from National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, prepared by Charles A. Florance).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Seward (William) House
Former Governor of New York, U.S. Senator, and
prominent anti-slavery advocate, Wm. Seward of Auburn, NY
once hid fugitives in his now historic house.

Location of Site
33 South Street
Auburn
NY
13021
Cayuga County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register,
LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- OP (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Foundation Hist. Assoc.
33 South Street
Auburn NY 13021

Historical Significance

The historic William Seward House is now an historic museum open to the public.

Seward was the first Whig Governor of New York State, serving two terms (1839-1843). A prominent anti-slavery advocate, his speeches on this subject made a strong impression on the young Whig Congressman from Illinois, Abraham Lincoln, ten years before the Lincoln-Douglass debates. As a Senator, Seward was . . . the acknowledged leader of the anti-slavery group. Fighting for the admission of California as a "free" state in a famous Senate speech in 1850, he refuted the Constitutional "rights" of slave-holders by invoking "a higher law than the Constitution," and predicted that slavery would be "removed by gradual, voluntary effort" or "the Union shall be dissolved, and civil war ensue, bringing on violent, but complete and immediate emancipation."

His wife, Frances Miller Seward, who had been brought up as a Quaker and attended Quaker schools in the area of Auburn, hid fugitive slaves in the back of the Seward house while Seward was a member of the United States Senate.

Seward also helped Harriet Tubman to acquire land in Auburn.
The present day Harriet Tubman Home and Museum is located on land that was acquired through the assistance of William Seward. (Excerpt from promotional literature of "The Historic Seward House." Information supplied by Betty Mae Lewis).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Smith, (Gerrit) Stone land office building of
The small stone building, once owned by the well known abolitionist and philanthropist--Gerrit Smith, is now a monument to the work of the great abolitionist.

Location of Site

Main Street
Peterboro
NY
13134
Madison County

Classification

Ownership- PU (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- OP (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Town of Smithfield

Historical Significance

The little stone land-office building located in the village of Peterboro in Madison County, today stands as a monument to Gerrit Smith, one of New York's outstanding abolitionists and philanthropists....Of the lands he inherited from his father, Smith distributed about 200,000 acres to poor settlers, both black and white.....

The little stone land office building is the only permanent landmark to the great abolitionist. It was from this building that Smith distributed the 200,000 acres of land to deserving settlers.

(Information submitted by Carl Frank, Director of the Peterboro area Museum).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
St. James A.M.E. Zion Church
Chartered in 1833, St. James has played a central role in the history of Ithaca's Afro-American community.

Location of Site
116 - 118 Cleveland Avenue
Ithaca
NY

Tomkins County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- UR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

A.M.E. Zion Church of Ithaca
320 North Tioga St.
Ithaca NY

Historical Significance

The St. James A.M.E. Zion Church is historically significant for the central role it has played in the history of Ithaca's black community, especially during the years of intense anti-slavery activity in the mid-nineteenth century. The church has been expanded many times, but the original stone meetinghouse is still visible in the present foundation. Built in 1836, it is believed to be Ithaca's oldest church and one of the oldest in the A.M.E. Zion denomination.

The Ithaca congregation was organized in 1825 as the "colored class" of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Gradually the black group split off from the Methodist Episcopal Church and in 1833 was chartered as the A.M.E. Zion Church of Ithaca. On August 15, 1836, a building lot on Wheat Street (now Cleveland Avenue) was purchased for $5 from Richard Varick DeWitt, son of Simeon DeWitt, Surveyor General of the United States and founder of the city of Ithaca. A notice in the ITHACA HERALD dated October 5, 1836 requested the public's support for the new church building. Presumably, construction was already underway at that time. It is believed that this first meetinghouse was a single stone room formed of the raised stone foundation with some sort of roof.

The 1830s building date distinguishes this as the oldest church building in Ithaca and possibly one of the oldest churches in the United States built by an A.M.E. Zion congregation.

Thomas James was one of St. James' first pastors. Rev. James was a travelling minister of the A.M.E. Zion Church. He aided the construction of the Rochester church and helped found the Syracuse congregation before coming to serve in Ithaca in 1838. It is evident from Rev. James' writings that Zion ministers were expected to take an active part in the struggle for freedom, and in each of his ministries he took up the work of the anti-slavery movement. After his tenure in Ithaca, Rev. James served A.M.E. Zion churches throughout the northeast and was known for the assistance he provided to slave and free refugees.

Another noted pastor of St. James in the early years was Jermaine Wesley Loguen, an ex-slave from Tennessee. In the 1840s when Loguen was an active agent of the "Underground Railroad" system in Syracuse, he became a close friend of Frederick Douglass. In later years, he was made a bishop of the A.M.E. Zion Church.

After the Civil War, growth and stability in Ithaca's black community was reflected in the gradual enlargement and improvement in the Zion church building. The record of the building's expansion is not clear, but major construction took place in 1861 and again in 1872. Renovation projects in 1895, 1913 and 1945 are recorded in the church minutes and reflected in historic photos and maps. These activities were often accompanied by financial hardship, and several times the deed was encumbered by mechanics' liens; the congregation even lost title to the property from 1896 to 1912. On such occasions, church appeals to the white community were met with generous assistance, and the records include the names of many prominent benefactors. In 1887, the white community presented St. James with the bell which now occupies the belfry.

Located in the heart of Ithaca's black neighborhood, the "southside," St. James has continued to serve as a secular meeting center as well as a religious focus. One notable meeting took place in St. James' basement in 1913, when seven Cornell students, disgruntled at discrimination in the campus fraternities, founded the national Negro fraternity Alpha Phi Alpha. (Excerpt from National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, prepared by Janette Johnstone.

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Steward, Austin Memorial
A memorial to Austin Steward, a 19th century Black abolitionist and businessman from Rochester, New York.

Location of Site
120 East Main Street
Genesee Plaza Holiday Inn
Rochester
NY
14604
Monroe County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- OP (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Holiday Inn-Genesee Plaza
120 East Main Street
Rochester NY 14604

Historical Significance

A memorial sculpture to Austin Steward, located in the Genesee Plaza Holiday Inn. The Holiday Inn is located on the site of Mr. Steward's first owned property and business in Rochester, New York.

One of the early pioneers of the village of Rochester, Austin Steward settled in Rochester in 1817. He was Rochester's earliest known black businessman and property owner, contributing to the economic growth of the early village days. As one of Rochester's earliest human rights advocates, he worked to abolish slavery and its aftermath of social, political and economic inequality.

Mr. Steward was born in Virginia in 1793 and liberated himself from slavery three years prior to settling in Rochester in 1817. Between that year and 1831, he established himself successfully in the grocery and dry goods business and bought several pieces of property in the center of the village.

Austin Steward devoted much of his time to assisting fugitives from slavery in Rochester and Canada, and participated in local, state, and national abolition conventions. He was also an advocate of equal voting rights and temperance.

Mr. Steward wrote his autobiography, TWENTY-TWO YEARS A SLAVE, AND FORTY YEARS A FREEMAN, which was published in Rochester in 1857. He died in Canancaigua in 1869 at the age of 76. (Information submitted by Calvin Hubbard and Ellen Swartz).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

The 369th Historical Society
Museum created to preserve and maintain the historical achievements of African Americans in the United States military. Largest collection of its type on East Coast.

Location of Site

2366 5th Avenue (142nd Street)
New York
NY
10037
New York County

Classification

Ownership- **PR** (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- **OC** (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- **OP** (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

369th Historical Society
2366 5th Ave.
New York NY 10037

Historical Significance

The 369th Historical Society's museum was created to preserve and maintain the historical achievements of African Americans in the United States military. The museum and historical society was named in honor of the 369th Regiment, an all-black military unit made up of Afro-Americans from New York. The regiment earned distinction in France during World War I. The regiment was cited 11 times for bravery, and they were awarded the French Croix de Guerre for gallantry under fire.

In addition to being lauded as the first regiment in U.S. history to serve as an integral part of a foreign army and the first Allied regiment to reach the Rhine River, the 369th is credited with the distinction of being the men who introduced jazz music to Europe. (Historical materials supplied by William Miles).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Tubman, (Harriet) Museum

The Harriet Tubman Museum, the Thompson Memorial Church which Harriet Tubman attended, and the burial site of the 19th century abolitionist are all located in Auburn, NY.

Location of Site

180 - 182 South Street
Auburn
NY

Cayuga County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NL (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

A.M.E. Zion Church
520 Red Cross Street
Wilmington NC

Historical Significance

The exploits of Harriet Tubman during the pre-Civil War period are well known. Her heroism in leading hundreds of slaves to freedom via the "Underground Railroad" has assured her a permanent and prominent place in Afro-American History. However, the activities of that remarkable woman during the half-century following the Civil War are often overlooked. It was during the latter period that she emerges as an interesting and important figure in the history of Afro-Americans in New York State. Ms. Tubman was a resident of Auburn, New York from 1857 until her death in 1913. Her gravesite is located in Auburn's Fort Hill Cemetary. The church that she attended--Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church is located just three blocks from her gravesite. The Harriet Tubman Home and Museum is also located in Auburn.

Harriet Tubman, an escaped slave from Maryland, traveled through Central New York many times during the pre-Civil War period in connection with her famed work on the "Underground Railroad." Abolitionist sentiment was strong in Central New York, and Harriet met and received support from many prominent people around that area. Men like Gerrit Smith of Syracuse, and William H. Seward of Auburn provided financial and other forms of support to the abolitionist cause.

Harriet moved to Auburn in 1857. Through the efforts of Seward, she was able to acquire a house and a small parcel of land on the outskirts of Auburn. The following year Harriet brought her aged parents to Auburn from Canada where she had taken them following their escape from slavery. Harriet was known around Auburn as a "free hearted" woman, a person who was always willing to share whatever meager material assets she possesed with persons who were less fortunate. Within a short time, her home became a haven for elderly and impoverished blacks. One account states that "there was a constant turnover of guests in her home, some staying only a few months, others remaining a lifetime, but she was never with less than a half dozen dependents, in addition to her parents.

In 1896 Harriet was the successful bidder at a public auction for "a 25 acre expanse" of terrain adjoining her residence. To make the purchase, she borrow the money from a local bank. It was her intention to turn the entire estate over to the A.M.E. Zion Church to be operated as a community farm cooperative. The house and land--approximately 26 acres--was deeded to the Church around 1903.

When Harriet Tubman died in 1913, she had become a legend in her own time. She died in the home for the aged that she had founded. She received tributes from all over the nation. The city of Auburn erected a monument in her memory. The 26 acre estate which Harriet deeded to the A.M.E. Zion Church is still owned by that denomination. The Harriet Tubman Home and Museum is located on that property. The building and grounds was designated as a state historic site by the State of New York in 1932. During the 1950s, the A.M.E. Zion Church renovated the home and opened it to the public.

After touring the facility and grounds of the Harriet Tubman Museum, visitors can take a five minute drive to the Fort Hill Cemetary to view the Harriet Tubman gravesite--marked with a small tombstone and located under a large cedar tree. From there, it is a distance of about three blocks to the Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church where Harriet was once a member.

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Valley Road Historic District
The site of what was once a community of free blacks, former slaves, and Matinecock Indians. Community called "Success" was established in 1829.

Location of Site
Community Drive
Manhasset
NY

Nassau County

Bounded by Community Drive on the east and Fresh Meadow Golf Course on the West.

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- OP (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

multiple

Historical Significance

The Valley Road Historic District is significant for its association with the historical development of Black and Indian culture on Long Island. The District composed of six buildings, a cemetery, and archaeological sites of structures, is all that remains of "Success," a community of free Blacks, former slaves, and Matinecock Indians established along Valley Road in 1829. The history of "Success" illustrates the fusion of minority cultures and their role in the social development of Long Island during the 19th century. Descendents of the founders of "Success" continue to live on the site.

Matinecock Indians inhabited the area of Cow (Manhasset) Bay before the arrival of the first Dutch and English settlers at Manhasset in the late 17th century. Eventually some Matinecocks were enslaved, and these intermarried with African slaves brought to Manhasset by white landowners. By 1790, a stable community of free Blacks, mulattoes, mustees (Black and Indian progeny) and whites existed south of Manhasset Bay. Following the abolition of slavery in New York State in 1827, numerous former slave families bought land and established the community of "Success" along Valley Road, Manhasset.

"Success" grew rapidly after 1829 when Moses and Susannah Coss, Black religious leaders from Flushing, brought a large portion of their congregation to settle along Valley Road. In 1833 the congregation built the A.M.E. Zion Church as the focal center of their growing community. Burials in the adjoining cemetery include many founders of "Success."

During the 19th century "Success" grew to a settlement of more than 30 dwellings and shops along Valley Road. In 1867 the inhabitants built "Institution u.s.a.," the first free Black school in the present Nassau County. The population of "Success" included farmers, stock breeders, baymen and tradesmen, and with the rise of large Long Island estates in the late 19th century, many found employment on these nearby country seats.

Suburban encroachment since WW II has obliterated all of "Success" except its church, cemetery, and the few residences which survive within the district from this once thriving community. The archaeological sites within the historic district may also subsequently yield significant information regarding community life in "Success." The history of the Valley Road Historic District is that of traditional Black and Indian culture on Long Island as shaped by the forces of social change over three centuries.
(Excerpt from National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form, prepared by Raymond W. Smith).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site
Villa Lewaro
The Harlem residence designed by Vertner Woodson
Tandy and built for Madame C.J. Walker in 1918.

Location of Site
North Broadway
Village of Irvington
NY

Westchester County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- NR (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- NO (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Anna E. Poth Corp.
North Broadway
Village of Irvington NY

Historical Significance

In 1907, twenty-two years after his birth in Lexington, Kentucky, Vertner Woodson Tandy became the first black architect of New York State. As a youngster, Vertner had assisted his father, Henry A. Tandy, a prominent contractor, who often acted as his own architect and contractor. After graduating from Cornell, Tandy established his architectural office at 1931 Broadway in New York City, the first by a black man in New York or any major northern city. His office remained in this area of New York for his entire 42 year career. At the time of his death in 1949, his office was located around the corner at 36 West 66 Street.

In 1917, Madame C.J. Walker commissioned Tandy to design Villa Lewaro, valued at $400,000. The home, from it s five-acre site in Irvington-on-the-Hudson, over-looks the Hudson River. With 34 rooms, the three-story residence was designed in Italian Renaissance style on the scale of a palace. The first floor contains, among other rooms, a 21 x 32 foot living-room and a room called the "Gold Room." The walls and ceiling of the "Gold Room" were trimmed in gold leaf decor ; there were gold-trimmed draperies; and a $25,000 specially made organ that was designed to chime on the quarter hour and pipe music throughout the house. A marble stairway extends from the first floor to the second-floor bedrooms, the slepping porches and five bathrooms. The third floor was designated as the servants quarters. Throughout the house, the detail and scale are almost exact replicas of Italian palaces, giving a most impressive account of architect Tandy's skill and Madame Walker's taste.

The story of her home, completed in 1918, was widely reported throughout the country by black and white newspapers. At her palatial home, Madame Walker entertained some of the country's most influential people of both races. The great Caruso, at the request of her daughter, named the luxurious home, "Villa Lewaro"--derived from the first two letters of her name: Lelia Walker Robinson. When asked by her guest why she'd built this home, Madame Walker, once responded that it was not for her, but for her people in order to see what could be accomplished, no matter what their background.

Villa Lewaro, was left to Lelia Walker Robinson, following her mother's death, just eight months after its completion. In 1951, upon the death of Lelia Walker Robinson, as her mother had requested, the Villa Lewaro was left to the NAACP. Hower, prohibitive upkeep expenses and taxes prevented them from accepting it. Most of the house's priceless interior furnishings were sold at public auction in 1930 , at incredibly low prices. In 1931, the dream of this pioneer black woman entrepreneur, "Villa Lewaro" was sold at auction for $47,000 to become Anna E. Poth's Home. It remains that today. (Excerpt from National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Weeksville, Hunterfly Road Historic Houses of
Restored houses in an area of central Brooklyn that was once the site of a 19th century Afro-American community called Weeksville.

Location of Site

1698-1708 Bergen Street
Brooklyn
NY
11213
Kings County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- OP (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Society for the Preservation of Weeksville & Bed. Stuy.
P.O. Box 120,
St. Johns Station
Brooklyn NY 11213

Historical Significance

Weeksville was one of two thriving black communities in Brooklyn--the other was located downtown--that sprang up after New York State abolished slavery in 1827. It began as a rural outpost for blacks when a stevedore named James Weeks built a home in what is now Bedford-Stuyvesant. Other blacks followed. They built a church, a school, an orphanage and a home for senior citizens.... A newspaper, THE FREEDOM TORCHLIGHT, began to appear weekly, and the community started a branch of the African Civilization Society.

There are indications that Weeksville also served as a waystation on the Underground Railroad. One of the houses contained a huge, basement that was clearly dug after the building was built. Certainly, several hundred of the blacks who fled Manhattan during the Draft Riots of 1863 sought refuge there. Weeksville residents armed themselves, ready to defend their fellow blacks from marauding white gangs who objected to being conscripted for a war they felt blacks caused.

After the Brooklyn Bridge opened in 1883, newly-arrived European immigrants flocked to the borough, and developed areas of downtown Brooklyn spread north. These changes began to swallow Weeksville. By the 1920s the close-knit black enclave had lost much of its identity.

The Society for the Preservation of Weeksville & Bedford-Stuyvesant History was organized under a 1971 Charter from the New York State Educ. Department to research, preserve and disseminate the history of African-Americans living in Central Brooklyn and in particular the area called Weeksville. During the progress towards these goals, the Weeksville Society purchased and is nearing completion of restoration of the New York City Landmarks, the Hunterfly Road Houses of Weeksville. The restored houses will serve as a museum of African-American History. Other activities during this phase of the museum development have included oral history, archeology, curriculum development, slide lectures and film making. (Information submitted by Joan Maynard, Executive Director, Weeksville Society).

SURVEY FORM
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NEW YORK STATE

Name and/or Description of Site

Westbury A.M.E. Zion Church *(See also Guinea Woods)
Congregation was organized in 1834 as New Light
Baptist Church. Later renamed. Moved to present site in
1867.

Location of Site

274 Grand Blvd.
Westbury
NY
11590
Nassau County

Classification

Ownership- PR (PUblic, PRivate)

Status- OC (OCcupied, UNoccupied)

Registration- (NR-National Register, SR-State Register, LR-Local Register, UR-Unregistered)

Public Access- RE (OPen, REstricted, NO public access)

Name and Address of Owner

Westbury A.M.E. Zion Church
274 Grand Blvd.
Westbury NY 11590

Historical Significance

"The Westbury A.M.E. Zion Church was founded by Rev. Eliakim Levy in 1834 under the name- New Light Baptist Church. An article prepared and delivered at the 77th Emancipation Celebration, held at Fireman's Hall, in 1941, included the following reference to the Church's early history:

In Westbury, (154) slaves were freed by voluntary manumission or freedom papers from members of the Religious Society of Friends or Quakers about 1776. These manumission papers are mentioned in a book, "Long Island Story," by Miss Jacqueline Overton of the Children's Library, Robert Bacon Memorial. . . .

The families [that] descended from the manumitted slaves worked for the farmers. Many were apprenticed until they were 18 and sent to school part time. In this way, they learned farming and home making by a good method.

Many of their descendants owned homes in Grantville in Westbury. . . . Grantville was the farm of Eliakim Levy and his descendants. . . . Eliakim Levi was the founder of a church, then called New Light Baptist and now known as the [Westbury] African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. . . .

The New Light Baptist Church, which was patterned along the lines of the Society of Friends, and we are told that the early fathers were formal in their speech and plain in their dress in keeping with the Quaker custom. The church was originally located in what was known as the Guinea Woods, in a clearing on Woodland Drive Road, (past Treadwells in the direction of Roslyn). In 1867, the congregation moved to the present site on Grand Blvd., (northeast corner where it crosses Union Avenue).

Rev. Levi served the church until 1879 and was succeededby Rev. Charles Hicks who served until 1892. It was during his administration that some differences arose and several members withdrew--somewhere around 1887 and became the nucleus of what is now known as the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Zion Church. In 1892, at the close of Rev. Hicks' administration, the church decided to seek admission into the New York conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church, and were received under the administration of the Bishop. The name of the church was then changed to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and Rev. W.H.A. Pringle was sent in May 1892 as the first A.M.E. Zion minister." (Historical source materials supplied by Jean Renigan, Historical Society of the Westburys).